ELLINOR;

OR,

THE WORLD AS IT IS.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MARY ANN HANWAY.

What guards the purity of melting maids
In courtly balls, and midnight maſquerades,
Safe from the treacherous friend, and daring ſpark?
The glance by day, and whiſper in the dark,
When kind occaſion prompts their warm deſires,
When muſick ſoftens, and when dancing fires? POPE.

VOL. II.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

ELLINOR.

CHAP. I.

SIR CHRISTOPHER CAYENNE has been, from early life, a mere plodding tradesman, who, aided by luck, without two ideas, when taken from pounds, ſhillings, and pence, was enabled to accumulate a princely fortune; but, as his time has been paſſed in acquiring money, like the greater part of his claſs, how to diſpoſe of it properly he is quite ignorant.

He has an only daughter, who was what is called faſhionably educated, at a ſeminary of moſt expenſive notoriety at the

weſt end of the town; where ſhe has been taught *every thing*, and excels in *nothing*, that ſhe might be fitted to appear as a woman of *ton*, for he is determined ſhe ſhall be a *lady*. In deſpite of every exertion, nature will prevail; ſhe is malicious, ignorant, and vulgar; theſe qualities ſhe inherits from her mother, who was a cook maid in the kitchen of Mr. Pepperpod, alderman and grocer, when ſhe firſt ſaw the hero of my tale, Chriſtopher Cayenne, whoſe original buſineſs was to break ſugar, ſcrape the ſhop door, carry out parcels, clean knives, and wait at table.

As Kit's various occupations threw him often within the focus of Molly's glances, and of theſe ſhe was not ſparing, his heart was ſoon thawed by the careleſs beauties diſplayed by this *melting* fair one, and *heated* by gratitude for the titbits of which ſhe made him a partaker, when the reſt of the ſervants were abſent; for theſe good and weighty reaſons he moſt religiouſly vowed upon the prayer-book, that he would make her his lawful wife, as ſoon as they could

could jointly ſave money enough to furniſh a room, and he found he could get a ſufficiency to maintain her and his mother, whom not even love for his dear Molly could make him neglect.

Kit was of a moſt pliant diſpoſition, diligent, ſober, honeſt, and attentive to the main chance; could ſtring proverbs with the facility of the governor of Barataria, the immortal Sancho; ſuch as, "He that would thrive muſt riſe at five; take care of the ſhillings, and the pounds will take care of themſelves," &c.—This attention to the *minutia* of buſineſs attracted the notice of his maſter, with whom he was become a great favourite: he prognoſticated that Kit would live to be a *good* man; and, that he might put him in the way of fulfilling his prophecy, on one of the ſhopmen quitting him to ſet up for himſelf, he was advanced to the vacant dignity. Thus was the firſt ſtep on the ladder attained; where, when once he felt his *feet*, a perſevering induſtry, with a few

lucky lifts from Dame Fortune, has enabled him to reach the top.

Mr. Pepperpod was an old bachelor; had amaſſed a large fortune by fair and equitable dealings in trade; he now wiſhed for a partner, who, being received with little money, would take upon himſelf the troubleſome part of the buſineſs, and relieve him from a burden he began ſeriouſly to think of laying down: full of this idea, he one day aſked Chriſtopher who were his parents, or if he had any relations that would advance a ſum of money for him, on the ſuppoſition that he was inclined to take him into partnerſhip? for he really thought it a pity ſuch an induſtrious young fellow ſhould not be enabled to make a puſh at fortune.

Chriſtopher, throwing out his leg from the fire-place to the door, as he made a flying bow, thanking his maſter moſt gratefully for all his goodneſs, ſaid, he feared that he could not profit by this generous offer; "for you

you know, Sir, the pariſh apprenticed me to you; my father, who was a ſhoemaker, died when I was very young, leaving my mother a widow, in bad circumſtances, with myſelf and one ſiſter to maintain, out of her daily earnings, ſo that ſhe was fain to apply to the overſeers for aſſiſtance, when I was big enough to be bound apprentice. In a lucky moment for me, I was placed with you, Sir.

"My ſiſter being a pretty handy girl at her needle, a milliner, with whom my mother chaired, took a fancy to her; taught her to make caps and furbelows, and then recommended her to wait upon a great merchant's lady, who, when ſhe died, left her a mort of fine clothes, and money beſide; but the beſt part of the buſineſs was, that her maſter has ſince married her."

"Well then, Chriſtopher, no doubt, ſhe will aſſiſt you to get on in the world, as ſhe has been ſo lucky in it herſelf; "the deuce a bit, Sir; ſhe is as proud as old nick; I have ſeen her but once ſince ſhe became a fine lady—that was at mother's, whom ſhe ſometimes calls upon,

becauſe ſhe is aſhamed to let her come to her own houſe: ſhe then deſired I would not think of calling there, becauſe ſhe ſaid it would diſgrace her huſband, if her poor relations viſited her. I replied, ſhe might have ſaved herſelf the trouble of this inſult, for I never would darken her doors till I was as independent as herſelf; I deſpiſed her pride as much as ſhe did my poverty; but that, as luck had found the way into the family, belike it would one day ſlap me on the back, as well as my ſiſter; then ſhe might expect a Rowland for her Oliver. As to her excuſes about her huſband's diſliking to ſee us, I did not believe a word of the matter, for he bore the character of a very worthy man; it was all along of her own ambition; for he muſt know, that if he married his maid, he could not expect her relations to be grand folks.

"On this we parted, and I have never ſeen her ſince. After I was gone, ſhe picked a quarrel with mother, for what ſhe called taking my part; ſaid ſhe would not allow her any thing, if ſhe ever did ſo again; but I

care not a farthing for that threat; for I have always maintained her ſince I was able to do it, and ſo I will ſtill."

His maſter commended the ſpirit he had ſhewn, praiſed his dutiful behaviour to his parent; and told him that he would proſper the better for it through life. He now enquired the name of the gentleman who had married his ſiſter: on being informed it was Mr. Oſwald, the Oporto merchant of Crutched-Friars, he replied, that he knew him very well, and would ſpeak to him in his favour, doubting not, on a proper repreſentation of his character, that he would advance the neceſſary ſum for him to begin the world with.

Mr. Pepperpod waited upon me, and recounted, verbatim, the converſation that I have juſt repeated, which gave me a very good opinion of the blunt honeſty of my new relation, of whom, till that moment, I had never *heard*: I lent him one thouſand pounds, for which I was to receive no intereſt

the firſt three years. I am aſhamed to ſay, I did this decidedly againſt the inclination of his ſiſter, who rather wiſhed to keep her brother back in the world, than to ſee him advanced. His name was now entered in the firm, and he became an active partner in the houſe, proving his gratitude to his patron, Pepperpod, by his unremitting attention to buſineſs.

Though his preſent ſituation in life was ſo much exalted, beyond what his moſt ſanguine hopes could have taught him to aſpire to, when he promiſed his *melting* Molly ſhe ſhould partake his fortunes; and though he might have pleaded the uſages of his betters, in ſimilar caſes, had he either choſe to forget, or refuſed to perform them; he was an honeſt man, and felt no change in his proſpects could juſtify or exculpate his conduct, to himſelf or the world, for not performing a contract voluntarily entered into, with a woman who loved him when he was *poor*, and depended on his faith for her future happineſs.

He

He therefore told his dear Molly, he was ready to marry her directly; but ſhe muſt agree to keep it a profound ſecret, and conſent to retire to lodgings he would provide for her reception; and, as ſoon as he ſaw an opportunity to reconcile his friends to the ſtep he had taken, he would acknowledge his marriage; but for him to do ſo at preſent would be the ruin of both, as he ſhould offend thoſe who had raiſed him from nothing, and on whom alone he muſt depend for future ſupport. Molly joyfully accepted theſe terms, and immediately became Mrs. Cayenne.

After a lapſe of time given to Chriſtopher's probation, his perſevering induſtry won the heart of his late maſter, who, having long wiſhed to retire from the buſtle of buſineſs, to enjoy the rural *ſweets* of Independent Hall, which he had built upon a bog in Eſſex, with a ſtagnant pond behind, exhaling in ſummer putrid vapours—in winter overflowing the grounds, and making the houſe ſwim like another ark,—the front cloſe to

a dusty road; to overlook which he had perked a summer-house on one corner of his garden wall, where, while enjoying the pleasure of smoking the best Virginia, he could have the superlative happiness of counting the stages, as they passed to and from London. For the charms of this delectable *villa*, he quitted business to Mr. Cayenne, taking his bond for the stock in hand, only retaining a bed-room at the house in town, where he might be accommodated when he revisited his fellow-citizens to partake of the calipash and calipee, that ever smoked on their boards, after the *safe* arrival of the West India fleet.

At this important æra of his good fortune, Mr. Cayenne thought it necessary to acknowledge himself a husband and a father; to bring home his sleek helpmate, and introduce her in the new character of presiding at the head of that table she had formerly lent her aid to *cover*. Mr. Pepperpod's anger at his favourite's improvident choice,

was much too violent to threaten a long continuance; her greateſt fault with him being want of money, not of birth; but Molly, the only name by which he ever addreſſed her, was gifted with a great portion of low cunning; ſhe therefore ſoon reconciled him to her, by a moſt perſevering attention to all his wants and whims; whenever he reviſited Cheapſide, ſhe made his bed herſelf, becauſe ſhe well remembered how her *dear* maſter liked to lay; ſhe cooked for him nice diſhes, and, like *Jacob*, won his bleſſing, by ſavoury meſſes: practiſing arts like theſe, ſhe ſoon became a formidable rival to her huſband, in Mr. Pepperpod's favour.

But truth obliges me to declare, that ſhe was not equally fortunate in gaining countenance and forgiveneſs from her ſiſter-in-law, my lady wife: ſhe would not hear of a reconciliation with a brother, who had given her ſuch a low-born, ill-bred, illiterate relation, whom ſhe vowed ſhe could never acknowledge. But, on my *drily* hinting, that

the leſs ſhe committed herſelf to the retorts of Mrs. Cayenne, by ſuch acrimonious invectives againſt forming improper connections, would be in *her* the moſt prudent conduct, ſhe ordered the chariot in a pet, and condeſcended to call on that lady. For ſeveral years after their firſt interview, by her cold and ſupercilious behaviour, my wife contrived to keep her in the back ground :— but as Mrs. Cayenne found her huſband's fortune increaſing rapidly, her conſequence roſe in proportion; ſhe now had a country houſe at Hackney, and her one-horſe chaiſe, in which ſhe, and her dear Chriſtopher, with little Mary on a ſtool before them, were jammed, and the vehicle loaded behind with the good things of this world; for Mrs. Cayenne was a profeſſed diſciple of Epicurus.

In this well-appointed equipage were they dragged to their rural retirement on a Saturday evening, by old Dobbin, who had toiled all the preceding week in the cart, and was fated

fated to take a *duſting* with the trio on Sunday; for, alas! the Sabbath was no day of *reſt* to him. Thus paſſed on ſome years, between the ſmoke of Cheapſide and the ſweets of Hackney marſh. While her huſband unremittingly toiled at the oar, Mrs. Cayenne's great ſoul panted to emerge from obſcurity, to ſee diſtant places, and partake of untaſted pleaſures. Chriſtopher was impenetrable to her oratory, and, unmoved by all her blandiſhments, though ſhe told him ſhe was dying to *enjoy*, what Miſs Duodecimo the other evening ſaid was ſo *enchanting*; "*A feaſt of raiſins, and a flow of ſoals.*"—"If that's all, my dear, you need not travel far for *them there* things;—you may eat in the ſhop as many as you pleaſe of the firſt; and, as to the ſecond, next time Tim goes that way, you may ſend him to Billingſgate, where you know they are to be had fine and freſh."

"Bleſs me, lovey, I don't mean any thing about eating; it is meat for the mind, I meant."

"Oh!

"Oh! is it ſo; then, deary, you muſt provide that for yourſelf, if you know *how*. I have plenty of employment in taking care of your *body*." Laughing heartily at his own wit, he left her to chew the cud of diſappointment, and plan new ſchemes; when ſhe ſoon hit upon one, that enabled her to carry her favourite point. As the autumnal ſeaſon approached, ſhe complained of pains in her head, low ſpirits, and loſs of appetite. Mr. Bolus, the apothecary, when conſulted, called her diſorder a relaxation of the *nervous ſyſtem*, for which he preſcribed four bark draughts, to be taken daily for a fortnight, then ſea bathing. The medicine was regularly ſent, and as regularly taken to the duſt-hole, while the lady employed herſelf in preparing for her journey to Margate, having extorted Chriſtopher's conſent, that ſhe ſhould go there at the expiration of the probationary time, fixed upon by Mr. Bolus.

Arrived at the pleaſant and ſalutary Iſle of Thanet, to which her Machiavelian plots had

had ſo long pointed; and having laved her glowing beauties in old Neptune's boſom, not to gain health, but becauſe it was the faſhion; ſhe was taken to the rooms by the ladies of Mr. Deputy Double Chin, and Mr. Sheriff Tripe; and, it being hinted to her by theſe ladies, that the gentlemen, y'cleped Maſters of the Ceremonies, who do the company the honour to preſide over the amuſements of thoſe water-dipping places, portion out *ſedulouſly* their reſpect and attentions to them who ſubſcribe the *moſt liberally* to the book opened for their emolument; no ſooner did ſhe diſcover that reſpect and precedence were purchaſeable commodities at a ſea-bathing place, than ſhe determined to bid as high a price for them as any city dame in the purlieus of Guildhall.

She entered with ſpirit, equal to the weight of her purſe, into the various diſſipations of the place: her name, at the head of *every raffle ſubſcription*, acted as a ſtimulative

tive to the ladies of her acquaintance to put down theirs: but, when ſhe diſplayed her red fiſt, and exultingly rattled the bones, all hearts palpitated, and "terrour was the order of the day;" ſo often did ſhe wield the box, and ſo frequently did ſhe carry away with her the envied prize from her deſponding cotemporaries.

But, like Penelope, the labours of the night rendered abortive the induſtry of the day; at the whiſt table, where ſhe met the ancient maiden, long accuſtomed to calculate the *odds*, the knowing Dowagers, and ſtill more wily Rooks; with theſe ſhe had no chance of ſucceſs; and loſt both her money and her temper. She vowed ſhe would play no more at that game; but would go and try her luck at the *twenty-one* table, for any body might comprehend that. But you will eaſily imagine that ſhe ſucceeded no better at this new enterpriſe; inſtead of loſing crowns, ſhe was now pigeoned of guineas. To avoid a total bankruptcy, ſhe made

made a haſty retreat to the foggy atmoſphere of London city. After this tour, ſhe thought herſelf a perſonage of no ſmall conſequence; ſhe took care to let Mrs. Oſwald underſtand that ſhe did ſo; and that ſhe did not mean to take things as ſhe had done, before ſhe knew her own weight in the ſcale of precedence.

About this period, Mr. Pepperpod was conveyed home in a dangerous ſtate from a veniſon feaſt, having dropped from his chair in an apoplectic fit, which cauſed his death. But who can attempt to deſcribe the tumultuous joy and ſurpriſe of the Cayenne family! when they found, at the opening of his will, that, with the exception of a few legacies to his old cronies, he had bequeathed the whole of his large fortune to Mr. Cayenne for the term of his natural life, and, at his deceaſe, to devolve to his daughter Mary, their only ſurviving child. The legacy amounted, at the loweſt eſtimation, to the ſum of fifty thouſand pounds.

This

This young lady, now ſuddenly become the heireſs of a large fortune, was, at the time of Mr. Pepperpod's death, at a country boarding-ſchool; from which ſhe was immediately removed to an elegant *ſeminary*, as before obſerved, becauſe ſhe was to acquire *all* the accompliſhments befitting her future proſpects, *her capability* of doing ſo not being once doubted.

Mr. Cayenne, on whom fortune thus poured her favours, did not retire to enjoy eaſe and opulence at Independent Hall, but ſtill continued his buſineſs: and, as the deſire of accumulating wealth generally increaſes with a great acquiſition, he was no longer contented to wait the ſlow but ſure returns of traffic. He now eagerly ſought to increaſe his capital by ſpeculating in the Alley; a *fatal* expedient to many! but his uſual good ſucceſs did not forſake him; he in a ſhort time, by ſeveral lucky hits, became the delighted poſſeſſor of a *plumb*, with every proſpect of doubling that ſum.

Rich,

Rich, and of courſe powerful, he has been choſen by his fellow citizens to fill moſt of their poſts of honour; and, when ſheriff, being deputed to go up with an addreſs to the throne, the King was graciouſly pleaſed to lay the ſword that was originally intended as a reward for *merit*, and a recompenſe to *valour*, on the ſhoulder that had not many years back been marked by the badge of charity, and he aroſe Sir Chriſtopher.

The eyes of this new Knight, dazzled by the brilliance of a court, and his ears faſcinated by the ſound of titles, he became ſuddenly poſſeſſed with the *mania* of ennobling his blood, by matching his daughter Mary to an illuſtrious ſuitor. When characters of this deſcription preſented themſelves, to his wondering optics, bowing and cringing, he did not deſpair of attaining ſuch a deſirable acquiſition; as he had heard of many inſtances of needy noblemen condeſcending to ſelect a wife from the daughters of opulent

lent citizens; and, as a title might be purchaſed, he thought that he could *now* afford to pay as high a price for the bauble as another.

From this moment he reſolved that, when his daughter attained a marriageable age, ſhe ſhould be the wife of a nobleman. I have not the ſmalleſt doubt, but he will keep his word, and beſtow her upon ſome ſpendthrift lordling, who, taking the lady from motives of neceſſity, will ſquander that wealth upon race horſes and opera girls, which he has *literally* amaſſed by the ſweat of his brow.

CHAP. II.

AFTER relating the hiſtory of the Cayenne family, we need not ſay who was the Honourable Mrs. Campley. The Colonel ſaw her at an Eaſter ball, when ſhe was pointed out to him as one of the largeſt fortunes in the city: he immediately procured an introduction to her, and entreated the honour of her hand for the evening. As he well knew how to render himſelf agreeable, and to aſſume the character of his company, it can occaſion no ſurpriſe that, with his handſome perſon, and inſinuating addreſs, he ſoon gained the heart of Miſs Cayenne from all competitors; and, though

Sir

Sir Chriſtopher proteſted vehemently againſt giving his daughter and his fortune to any but a *lord*, the tears of his lady, the hyſterics of Mary, who vowed ſhe would not exiſt without her dear Colonel, at laſt wrung from him a ſlow and unwilling conſent; but not before Campley had aſſured him, on his *ſacred honour*, that his elder brother, Lord Fairfield, never intended to marry. This information kept the hope alive, that he might yet live long enough to be the grandfather of a *little* lord.

Campley could not ſo eaſily reconcile himſelf to endure the mortifications he muſt encounter from the ironical ſarcaſms of his faſhionable acquaintance, when he was under the neceſſity of introducing to them his city bride. Long and ardent were the ſtruggles, upon this momentous occaſion, between his family pride, and his poverty; the latter was gaining upon him by haſty ſtrides, and he at laſt determined to ſubdue the former, and offer his hand to the heireſs of the city Knight; which, having been accepted,

matters

matters were *en train*, at the time Howard first ſought from him an introduction to the Lavington family. In complying with the requeſt of his friend, he encountered the bright eyes of our heroine; with whom he was as much captivated as a man could be, who had been captivated a hundred times already.

Marrying a pretty beggar for love, not being one of the articles of his creed, this affair of the heart did not prevent his viſits to Miſs Cayenne; the lawyers proceeding to draw the marriage ſettlements, or the paraphernalia indiſpenſible to the eclat of modern matrimony. So eager was he to bring the farce to a *denouement*, that Seddons was hurried to complete the furniſhing their houſe in Portman-ſquare, Hatchet to finiſh the carriages, and Jefferies to ſet the diamonds. As the principal ſcene lay in the city, it was carried on ſo quietly, that, though all talked of his paying his devoirs to Plutus in the perſon of ſome fair one who reſided within the

the ſound of Bow bell; ſhe never had been ſeen, nor her name as yet known, in the faſhionable circles at the weſt end of the town, till the unfortunate adventure at Ranelagh introduced her to his aſtoniſhed friends.

This he did not foreſee, nor could prevent; for on that ill-fated day, he had dined with Sir Chriſtopher, when a lady of the party propoſed going to take their tea at that celebrated place of amuſement, where fire-works were alſo to be exhibited in the courſe of the evening. This was acceded to; and Sir Chriſtopher determined to make one of the party; ſaying, he had never ſeen that *round-about place* in his life. Campley, who could not avoid attending his lady elect, reſolved to go at too early an hour to hazard meeting any of his quality friends: he thought he might truſt to the Knight's affection for his ſupper, that he would make his exit before the *haut ton* arrived. But in this expectation he was diſappointed; for the novelty and ſplendour of the ſcene ſo faſcinated the ladies, that they would neither

ther ſit ſtill, nor hear of going home; but, leaving Sir Chriſtopher, like Cerberus, to guard the box, and amuſe himſelf with a conſtant ſupply of rolls and butter, they dragged Campley as a captive in their train, round the rotunda, through the gardens and the crowd; in vain he remonſtrated; in vain he ſhrinked from, or dodged behind thoſe whom he wiſhed not to be known by; the ladies were deaf to his entreaties, and too much delighted with all they ſaw and heard, to think of returning to the expecting Knight. With the conſequences of their prolonged ſtay our readers are already acquainted.

Mrs. Oſwald, who had been reconciled to her brother's choice of a wife, and was grown very fond of him, ſince he became rich, and had a title, was now quite in raptures at the thought of having a man of faſhion for her nephew: ſhe had therefore wrote to Sir Chriſtopher, to requeſt that he and his lady, with the new married pair,

would ſpend the honey-moon at Morton Abbey. When this was propoſed to the Colonel, he was going to give his *veto* to it; nothing being farther from his intentions than to murder his precious time in the dull monotony of ſuch a family party. Juſt as he was about to make his excuſes for not accepting the honour of the invitation, Sir Chriſtopher happened to mention the ſituation of his ſiſter's ſeat, when its affinity to Avon Place ſtruck him; and, gracefully bowing on the hand of his intended bride, he told her with much gallantry, "that, in her ſociety, all places muſt be *equally* charming;—her preſence would make a "deſert ſmile, and paradiſe would open in the wild."

"Lord, Colonel," replied Miſs Cayenne, "my aunt's houſe is not in a wild deſert, but ſtands in a mighty pretty park; to be ſure it looks gloomy, and reminds one of a church. If I was my couſin James, when I came of age, I would pull down all the old faſhioned battlements, ſtone turrets, and the tumble-down chapel, that's covered over with

with ivy, which makes it look ſo diſmal: they call it a *fine ruin*; for my part I could never find out what ruins were good for, except as an habitation for owls, bats, and ſuch vermin. I ſhall moſt certainly adviſe James to deſtroy it, and build in its place a pretty modern red brick houſe, ſuch as *ours* at Independent Hall."

"There, Colonel," chuckled Sir Chriſtopher, "you find Mary has a fine taſte for improvement."

"For *alteration* I perceive ſhe has, ſir; and if Mr. Oſwald is equally *gifted* with his fair couſin, I make not the leaſt doubt but he will put her plan in execution."

The irony conveyed by his compliments his auditors were not capable of appreciating; therefore they took them *all* in the literal ſenſe. Campley, hiding under the ſimulating ſmile of pleaſure, the mortification he ſuffered from the illiterate ideas and vulgar ignorance of the woman to whom

he was going to give the honour of his name, ſaid, " let us not waſte our time in talking of old caſtles, or modern houſes, but of the day when my charming Mary will permit her adoring Campley to lead her to the temple of Hymen."

The young lady's countenance ſhewed how happy the requeſt had made her, which ſhe had expected for many weeks with the utmoſt impatience. Her father directly named that day week; ſaying he hated ſhilly ſhally when all was ready. His daughter aſſented, " nothing loth."

At the appointed time, ſhe became Mrs. Campley; when they immediately ſet off for Morton Abbey. She, rejoicing at being the wife of the moſt faſhionable man in town; and he, at the being put in poſſeſſion of one hundred thouſand pounds, the fortune given her by Sir Chriſtopher, who was ſaid to be worth *three* times that ſum; beſides

beſides the fifty thouſand that was, by the will of Mr. Pepperpod, to devolve to Mrs. Campley at his death. Sir Chriſtopher had ſtill worldly wiſdom enough left to have the latter ſum ſettled upon his daughter and her children. Having ſafely conducted, and properly introduced, the happy pair and their ſuite to Morton Abbey, we will leave them to enjoy their *tete-a-tete's* in its ſombrous ſhades.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

WE will now look back to our favourite Howard, who journeyed on, his heart oppreſſed with jealous fears and gloomy melancholy, without the exhilirating aid of hope to cheer the preſent, or brighten his future proſpects. He was miſerable in the extreme at each receding mile that he paſſed, when leaving England, and his adored Ellinor. His uncle found him not the moſt *pleaſant companion* in a poſt-chaiſe, in the early part of their travels; but, by the time they arrived at Paris, his natural wiſh to make himſelf agreeable, and to contribute to the happineſs of others, occaſioned him to make an exertion, to ſhake off that melancholy

lancholy that was taking faſt hold of him, convinced, by his good ſenſe, that it would thrive by indulgence; he therefore endeavoured to appear cheerful and contented; in this he was much aſſiſted by the conſtant buſtle and viſits, of which they were obliged to partake. His uncle, wiſhing to wean him from his attachment in England, had procured letters of introduction to many of the Nobleſſe, by whom they were received with politeneſs, treated with urbanity, and had an opportunity of ſeeing that once gay city, in all its ancient brilliancy and ſplendour. At the period of which we are ſpeaking, the life and ſpirit of that animated people were ever exerted, to render themſelves and their gueſts equally volatile and happy.

A Frenchman never gives a retroſpective pang to the paſt, nor lets anxiety for the future, cloud his vivacity; the preſent moment is his, and he enjoys it with a *goût*, that we cold iſlanders cannot imitate; our

philoſophic phlegm diſables us from "ſnatching a joy beyond the reach of fate." By regrets for thoſe that are paſt, and fears for ſorrows to come, we baniſh happineſs, and refine upon miſery.

Howard wrote to Ellinor from Paris, and had the happineſs of receiving an anſwer, filled with expreſſions of the higheſt eſteem, and moſt ſincere friendſhip; in which ſhe kept her promiſe, of acquainting him with all that had happened to her ſince his abſence. The rencontre with her guardian was not forgot, or how pleaſantly her time glided away at Avon-Place, where ſhe was learning to be a philoſopher, from the precepts and practice of Sir James: ſhe gave him a lively deſcription of his friend Campley's matrimonial eſtabliſhment, as ſhe had met the pompous parade in its way to Morton-Abbey, the ſeat of his new relations, and of its proximity to Avon-Place; —that ſhe had every reaſon to believe the bride was the identical Miſs Cayenne, who had been her

her ſchool-fellow, and profeſſed enemy, at Mrs. Auſtin's, and the original occaſion of her being ſent to France. She concluded her letter by obſerving, whether *bad* means are not ſometimes permitted, that *good* may ariſe from them, remains yet to be aſcertained in the future life of your friend Ellinor.

On the return of Sir James, from his viſit to Morton-Abbey, he informed the ladies that he had ſeen the Colonel, who introduced him to his bride. Here Auguſta's impatience for a deſcription of her interrupted him, with, "Pray, my dear papa, favour me with an account of her perſon; for I am dying to know what ſort of a being ſhe is, how ſhe is related to Mrs. Oſwald, and whether Colonel Campley appears to be *really* in love with her?"

"Stop," replied Sir James, laughing at her eagerneſs, "do not multiply your queſtions ſo faſt, and I will try to prevent your expiring this time through ungratified cu-

rioſity; but ſay, which of your demands ſhall I firſt comply with!"

"Oh! a deſcription of the lady by all means, as of the moſt conſequence."

"Well then, Mrs. Campley is rather below the middle ſize, much inclined to *embonpoint*; was her hair diveſted of Marechale powder, of which ſhe wears a great quantity, I ſhould ſuppoſe it to be black. Her complexion, like her perſon, is coarſe. Your friend, lady Fanny Flutter, would ſay, that it reminded her of the rude health of a dairy-maid; but truth obliges me to obſerve, that even lady Fanny herſelf cannot take more pains to hide the *gifts* of nature, by *art*, than Mrs. Campley appears to do. Her noſe, if it comes under *any* of the names by which that feature is diſtinguiſhed, muſt be denominated a pug. Her eyes are ſmall, dark, and fierce, which make me augur, our friend, the Colonel, will meet with a ſufficient quantity of acid in his *cara ſpoſa*, to prevent the matrimonial honey cloging his ſtomach. To conclude this deſcription,

tion, there is a vulgarity in her perſon and manners, and a vacuum in her mind, that it was evident to me, made Campley aſhamed of his choice; for neither enamel, or fine clothes, can alter her perſon, or gold compenſate for the want of elegant manners. Having ſaid thus much of the lady, I preſume, Auguſta, you will think your *laſt* queſtion anſwered, by complying with the *firſt*."

"Undoubtedly, my dear Sir; and I am infinitely obliged, by your lively deſcription, from which it may be clearly underſtood, what ſentiments ſuch a man as Colonel Campley muſt entertain for the woman you have delineated. But now you have told us what ſhe *is*, pray add to the obligation, by acquainting us who ſhe *was*." Here Sir James recounted the *Knight's tale*, as told by Mr. Oſwald.

This convinced Ellinor ſhe was right in her conjectures, when ſhe ſuppoſed that Mrs. Campley was formerly her ſchool-

fellow; ſhe recollected how much ſhe had been ſtruck with her features at Ranelagh, though the view ſhe then had was too tranſient to perfectly recognize that young lady, therefore dreaded renewing the acquaintance. She had, in the early part of her life, too often experienced the force of her malignant ſpirit, to doubt that it would now be exerted to the utmoſt to make her appear deſpicable, by exhibiting the ſtory of her parents, that ſhe had been *forced* to tell, as a falſehood fabricated for the purpoſe of impoſing upon Sir James and lady Lavington, to gain to herſelf a falſe conſequence. Our unfortunate heroine had been compelled by her peculiar ſituation, and her inflexible guardian, in this *ſingle* inſtance, to act diſingenuouſly.

Her heart ſhrunk from the conflict ſhe thought herſelf fated to undergo; ſhe wiſhed anxiouſly to avoid making the propoſed viſit; but, convinced that in the familiar intercourſe of the families, they muſt meet

meet inevitably at ſome future period, ſhe retired to dreſs, trying to acquire fortitude, from the hope that years, and the growth of her perſon, ſince they parted at Mrs. Auſtin's ſchool, might have cauſed in her ſuch an alteration, that Mrs. Campley would not now recollect her.

While the coach conveyed them to Morton-Abbey, Ellinor remained depreſſed and ſilent. Auguſta enjoyed in idea the pleaſures ſhe promiſed herſelf from the motley characters that were at preſent its inhabitants. As the carriage drove up the long avenue that fronted the Abbey, her tremor increaſed, her boſom palpitated, her lips trembled, and the colour forſook her cheeks. Lady Lavington, to whom ſhe ſat oppoſite, ſeeing an evident change in her countenance, ſaid, "Surely, child, you are ill!"

"No, Madam, I am only oppreſſed by the heat, and ſhall be better when I leave the coach." She ſtruggled now to ſubdue feelings

feelings that ſhould only attend on guilt, and to conquer the ſad *preſentiment*, that vexation, and keen mortification, awaited her at the Abbey.

In a few minutes they found themſelves at the entrance of Mrs. Oſwald's ſtate drawing-room. At the upper end ſhe ſat; on her right-hand the blooming bride, full dreſſed in white and ſilver, ornamented with oriental pearls, of immenſe value, to receive the compliments of the neighbouring gentry, with whom the room was nearly filled, when our party was announced thro' the wheezing lungs of the fat butler, who, never having before acted the Sir Clement Cotterell, to ſo ſplendid a Court, was nearly breathleſs from his unuſual exertions. The whole county had come to gratify their curioſity with a peep at the bride, as the gay bridegroom was perſonally known to moſt of them. Lady Lavington's party was now met by Mrs. Oſwald, with the unbending formality, and ſtately etiquette, of the Court

Court of Elizabeth, and ſeverally introduced to her niece, the Honourable Mrs. Campley, who having received their compliments with awkward ſtiffneſs and frigid hauteur, *ſtarted* when Miſs Harcourt was preſented to her, viewed her with a look of keen inquiry, as ſhe made her courteſy, and followed her with a ſcrutinizing eye as ſhe retired to a chair below Miſs Lavington's.

Ellinor now ſtole a look at Mrs. Campley, ſaw her in earneſt converſation with her aunt, frequently honouring her with ſcornful glances, that convinced our Heroine ſhe was the object of their diſcourſe, and that ſhe was recollected by that lady. The gentlemen now entered, when Campley, having made his bow of ceremony to the company aſſembled to do him honour, came up directly to pay his particular devoirs to the Lavingtons, whom he profeſſed himſelf ſuperlatively happy to meet; leaned familiarly upon the back of the chairs of Auguſta and Ellinor, flirted their fans, whiſpered, laughed, and obliged

obliged them to join him, by the droll and ſatirical remarks he made upon the company; nor did he forget to call their attention to the inimitable contraſt, exhibited in the two ſiſters-in-law; the perſon of the capacious Lady Cayenne arrayed in roſe-colour ſatin, full trimmed with point lace, fanning for breath, to reſpire under this load of finery and conſequence; oppoſed to her the upright thin figure of Mrs. Oſwald, clothed in a white luſtring ſacque, who appeared to have ſo little ſubſtance on her fleſhleſs bones, that, as ſhe advanced with ſlow and meaſured ſteps to Lady Cayenne, Campley declared, ſhe brought to his remembrance the celebrated old ballad of Death and the Lady.

All this time his bride was darting looks of ſcorn and anger at our poor heroine, which at laſt attracted the attention of Auguſta, who ſaid, "Pray, Colonel, what can be the reaſon that Mrs. Campley honours

us

us by ſuch glances of marked diſapprobation? I hope ſhe is not jealous already."

"*De tout mon cœur*; if you are right in your conjectures, fair lady, the ſooner ſhe is made acquainted that I do not mean to wear the trammels of reſtraint, the better; ſhe may reſt aſſured, ſuch an idle, gay, giddy fellow, as I have ever been, did not marry to be frightened at the looks of a *wife*, or to be led about by a ribbon, like her French lap-dog! ſo think not of her anger, or its conſequences, to your humble ſervant."

By this time whiſpers were in circulation through the room; to judge by the looks of thoſe that promulgated them, they were fraught with momentous conſequences to Ellinor, on whom all eyes were directed; and, as the buz approached her, ſhe had the mortification of hearing, "Well, I am not ſurpriſed, I always thought ſhe was a ſet-up aſſuming creature, who gave herſelf airs of

of conſequence from being puſhed into good company, and, from the fooliſh flattery of the men, thought herſelf a wit and a beauty."

"It is very clear to me, ſhe has no pretenſions to either of thoſe appellations," cried a *ſtarched Miſs* of forty five."

"I don't ſee," replied Lady John Dareall, that the poor thing is ſo much to blame; if there is any, it adheres to Lady Lavington, who it appears has, under a feigned character and a fictitious name, introduced her into ſociety, to which ſhe has no pretenſions: but I believe, Letitia, *you*, and the Miſſes like *you* of the neighbourhood, are more inclined to rejoice at the diſcovery of the girl's no-origin, than to be angry at the affront put upon you; as you will by it be enabled to vote this pretty Doll to Coventry, who has found the art, though you, Letitia, avow ſhe has neither wit nor beauty, to allure all the men, old, young, and middle-aged, in the county, from your *riper* charms."

From

From this ſpeech, which was very audibly articulated, Ellinor found herſelf the ſubject of converſation, and her fears from Mrs. Campley's malice, more than realized. — She could no longer ſupport her ſpirits, or encounter the ardent gaze of the whole company, and their ſarcaſtic whiſpers, which reached her ears from every direction; therefore, telling Auguſta that ſhe found herſelf very ill, entreated her to requeſt Lady Lavington to permit the carriage to take her home. This was complied with immediately; but, before it could be got up, overcome by the poignancy of her ſenſations, ſhe fainted in the arms of her friend. This drew *all* the gentlemen to her aſſiſtance; but, except Lady Lavington and her daughter, not a *ſingle* lady!

Ellinor was accuſed, not convicted, of being illegitimate, unfortunate, and poor; of courſe theſe faſtidious ladies could not think of coming in contact with *ſuch* a culprit. No one appeared more concerned at her illneſs, or took

took a more active part in her recovery, than Campley, who broke Mrs. Oſwald's unyielding bell-wires in ringing for the help of the female ſervants. Ellinor was now carried into another room, where, after a conſiderable time, the burnt feathers, and ſtrong volatiles applied by Mrs. Girkin, reſtored her to life, and a ſenſe of ſorrow. At her earneſt entreaties to return to Avon-Place, ſhe was helped into Sir James Lavington's carriage by himſelf and Campley, and accompanied by the reſt of the family. She ſpoke not one word during their ride home; but directly after their arrival was put to bed, and a compoſing draught being adminiſtered by her ladyſhip, ſhe was left to the care of Mrs. Betty, with orders to ring for aſſiſtance, if ſhe had a relapſe.

At ſupper Lady Lavington expreſſed ſurpriſe at the inexplicable behaviour of all parties that evening; ſhe remarked on the evident diſlike Ellinor had manifeſted to viſit the Campleys, her abſence of mind, and lowneſs

lowneſs of ſpirits, in their ride to Morton-Abbey, the contemptuous looks and aſtoniſhment of the bride, from the moment of Ellinor's introduction; all theſe circumſtances convinced her that they had met before; that Mrs. Campley had whiſpered ſomething to her aunt, and ſhe to the reſt of her company, in conſequence of that knowledge, was equally certain; whatever was the nature of the intelligence thus communicated, it was undoubtedly the cauſe of her fainting and preſent illneſs; and ſhe added, "Did you not ſee, Sir James, that neither Mrs. Oſwald, her daughters, or any other lady in the room, offered the leaſt aſſiſtance, or paid her the ſlighteſt attention? What can it be, that could occaſion ſuch ſtrange and unaccountable behaviour?"

"I cannot, my dear," ſaid Sir James, "anſwer your queſtion, which is as profound a myſtery to me as to yourſelf; but I moſt earneſtly entreat you will defer making any comments, or drawing any concluſions, to Ellinor's diſadvantage, from the

the behaviour of a ſet of women to one of their own ſex, which nothing ſhort of irreclaimable guilt could juſtify. I am convinced that, as ſoon as her health permits, ſhe will clear up this enigmatical buſineſs, by proving her innocence to your ſatisfaction from any accuſations brought againſt her by the malignant Mrs. Campley, in whoſe countenance I perceived, at my firſt glance, all the bad paſſions in embryo. Nothing but her own avowal can make me credit, that *vice* ever inhabited ſuch a heart as Ellinor's."

Auguſta profeſſed to entertain the ſame ſentiments with her father, and warmly juſtified her friend, ſuppoſing the whole to ariſe from the jealous malice of Mrs. Campley. As a proof that her ideas were well founded, ſhe recounted the obſervation ſhe had made to the Colonel on the envious looks of his lady, as he leant over her chair, and his anſwer to her remarks. She now rung for her woman, and ſaid ſhe ſhould pay a viſit to the invalid before ſhe retired for the night.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE poor perſecuted Ellinor, whoſe feelings were too poignantly rouſed by the occurrences of the evening to obtain any advantage from an opiate, lay awake, reſtleſs and perturbed, revolving how ſhe ſhould act in her preſent dilemma; whether ſhe ſhould tell her ſad ſtory as it really was, or ſtill perſiſt in that, which had been dictated by her guardian, and had brought her into this unpleaſant ſituation. Her heart, ever repugnant to falſehood, revolted at continuing to impoſe on the credulity of her benefactors: but, had it not been ſtrenuouſly urged to her, that ſecreſy was neceſſary to

to the authors of her exiſtence; that their happineſs depended upon the tale ſhe had been obliged to tell? This might be falſe, an invention of that ruthleſs woman to divide her from parents, to whom ſhe never loſt the idea of being one day reſtored: for ſhe reaſoned thus,—how could they be injured by her relating the little ſhe knew of herſelf, which their caution had enveloped in ſuch inexplicable myſtery? did they deſerve ſuch a ſacrifice from a child, whom they had cruelly abandoned to a mercileſs world?—under whoſe ſarcaſms ſhe now ſuffered,—laſhed by inſults, goaded by contempt,—the innocent victim, in all probability, of a lawleſs paſſion, and now puniſhed for their crimes! did ſhe owe to them her honour, integrity and truth? theſe were her only poſſeſſions, by which ſhe could hope to conduct herſelf through a life to which they had given exiſtence, but now refuſed to ſupport. On the feelings of her heart, which, when left to its own impulſes, ever led her to act with openneſs and candour, ſhe determined in future

future to rely; and to try all her actions by the criterion of *truth*.

Often had the ſmall ſtill monitor conſcience ſuffuſed her face with bluſhes at the ungrateful part ſhe was acting, in impoſing herſelf, under a falſe character, on her kind protectors, Sir James and Lady Lavington; permitting them to introduce to their friends, as a gentleman's daughter, a being unowned, who knew not

'To whom ſhe was related, or by whom begot.'

After this mental ſtruggle, Ellinor came to a determination the next morning to undeceive her patrons, by recounting to them *all* ſhe knew of herſelf, before ſhe was received into their houſe: whatever might be the conſequence of ſuch a confeſſion to her future life, ſhe felt it a duty ſhe owed them, and herſelf. Having come to this reſolution, ſhe found her mind much relieved. When Auguſta entered her chamber, ſhe was agreeably ſurpriſed to find her ſo much

better than ſhe expected. Ellinor, taking her hand, ſaid, " my dear friend, I am afraid the whole of my behaviour, on the eventful viſit of this evening, muſt appear very ſtrange to Sir James, Lady Lavington, and yourſelf; but I truſt to their and your kindneſs, not to condemn me unheard. I hope to be well enough recovered to meet you at the breakfaſt table to-morrow morning, when I flatter myſelf I ſhall be able to make it appear that, though your humble friend is unfortunate, ſhe is not criminal; an innocent ſufferer for the faults of others, ſhe is expoſed alone in a world, ever ready to condemn the poor and friendleſs, when accuſed by the rich and powerful.

It is certain ſhe has nothing to oppoſe to ſuch antagoniſts, but the ſhield of *truth*, which, in future, no motive ſhall induce her to quit. Good night, my dear Auguſta; I commend myſelf to your prayers, that I may find ſupport in the trial which awaits me, from him who formed all his creatures of one clay,—who alike animated the prince and the peaſant,

ſant, however differently they are diſpoſed of in this world, for purpoſes that finite wiſdom cannot fathom."

Auguſta embraced her affectionately, and retired to her own room to ponder over all ſhe had heard and ſeen, and to wiſh for the morning, that was to develope the myſtery; while Ellinor, after offering up her humble oriſons to the throne of mercy, fell into a ſweet ſlumber, from which ſhe did not awake till eight o'clock the next day.

Not ſo reſted the *cauſe* of her recent mortification, the Honourable Mrs. Campley; her boſom was a ſcene of warfare, where all the bad propenſities of her natural diſpoſition ſtruggled for maſtery. This lady's mind was formed of a texture capable of retaining to years of puberty, the envy, malice, and uncharitableneſs imbibed in childhood; to which were ſuperadded the pangs of jealouſy, from the attentions of her huſband to the hated Ellinor, whom ſhe was now fated to behold, grown up a beautiful and accom-

pliſhed woman, elegantly dreſſed, reſiding with, and careſſed by people of faſhion; introduced to, and reſpected by their friends. She foreſaw that ſhe ſhould meet this baſiliſk to her eyes the enſuing winter, in all public places, and private parties;—was this to be endured?

Having left Ellinor in the ſleep of innocence, we will take a retroſpect of Mrs. Campley's conduct on her being introduced to her, which will unravel the buſtle it occaſioned. No ſooner had Miſs Harcourt taken her ſeat, than ſhe was recogniſed by the piercing eyes of her old enemy—as the *little Ellinor*, whom ſhe had hoped never again to behold. Addreſſing Mrs. Oſwald in a ſtage whiſper, ſhe enquired by what *name* ſhe had introduced the lady dreſſed in crape, her hair without powder, bound round with white roſes?

"Oh, you mean ſhe that came with Lady Lavington; it is a Miſs Harcourt: her father was an officer of ſome rank, and died

in America, as did his lady, who accompanied him, when we were at war with that country. How ſhe got introduced to Lady Lavington, I do not know; but they brought her with them from London ſome few months ſince. She was taken as a companion to Miſs Lavington, to talk French with her, after her governeſs, Madame Dupré, went away: ſhe is reckoned highly accompliſhed, and very beautiful; but I cannot ſee any thing in her ſo very particular; all the men here are mad after her; no other woman is taken any notice of when ſhe is preſent.

This lady is ſuch a favourite with Sir James, that ſhe does juſt what ſhe pleaſes: they ſay ſhe is more miſtreſs in the houſe than Lady Lavington; for he uſed formerly to be ſuch a poor, melancholy, moping creature,—indeed ever ſince he married her ladyſhip,—never mixing with *her* company; ſpending his whole time in his library; poring over books, or riding out alone, in the moſt gloomy parts of the foreſt. Since this Ellinor is be-

come one of the family, he is quite an altered man."

"Yes," pertly added Miſs Oſwald, who had attended to this converſation; "Lady John Dareall, who uſed to call Avon Place the Cave of *Care*, ſays the touch of this young enchantreſs, has turned its tragic appearance into the farce of 'Alive and Merry, or, 'The Dead reſtored to life."

"Juſt ſo," ſaid Miſs Emma, "they now have concerts once a fortnight; and the ball-room, that has been ſhut up ſo long, is re-opened, painted, and ornamented. We have received cards for a rural *fête*, that is to be given next month, on Sir James's birth day; ſo that Avon Place, which uſed to be the graveſt, is now become the gayeſt ſeat in the county."

"True," obſerved Mrs. Oſwald; "all the young folks are delighted at the change, and adore Miſs Harcourt as the cauſe of it. I muſt allow ſhe is very civil and obliging to every body: it is ſaid ſhe is very good to the poor; and is perfectly worſhipped by the

the ſervants, whoſe faults ſhe is ever ready to excuſe, and to ſpeak to Lady Lavington in their favour."

"I think, aunt," pettiſhly obſerved Mrs. Campley, "you are as much infatuated as the reſt of her admirers. I wonder for which of her ſuppoſed perfections ſhe is indebted for your approbation? I believe I can give a better account of that lady, and her qualifications, than you can do.

She is an *impoſtor*; has no pretenſions to be called an officer's daughter, or to the name of Harcourt; being brought, when very young, to the ſchool of a Mrs. Auſtin, in Hertfordſhire, where I was a boarder, becauſe Sir Chriſtopher thought it better for my health that I ſhould begin my education in the country, than at a London *ſeminary*. At Mrs. Auſtin's ſhe was known only as the little Ellinor, that belonged to *nobody*. There was a woman, never called by any name, that came once a year to pay for her board. She never left the ſchool at the holidays like other young ladies: it was ſuppoſed *there* ſhe was the

baſtard of ſome married man, by his ſervant; ſhe had ſuch low cunning in all her ways; was ſo artful and envious of her betters; *me* ſhe hated, though I would have been very *kind* to her, as ſhe was poor and friendleſs; but ſhe had too much pride to receive favours, and behaved with ſuch inſolence, and ingratitude to me for my good intentions, that it ſhocked every one; then ſhe made ſuch quarrels in the ſchool, that through her plots it became divided into two parties, and rendered it ſo diſagreeable, that if the woman to whom ſhe belonged had not come and took her away in a great hurry, Mrs. Auſtin would have loſt the beſt part of her ſcholars; for her temper was ſo bad, ſhe was never eaſy but when ſhe was ſetting all the ladies together by the ears.

She was *then* as artful as you deſcribe her to be *now*; ſhe could always wheedle the governeſs, and make her believe ſhe was the injured party: when ſhe was going to puniſh any of us for her tales, then ſhe would ſhed crocodile tears, and beg us off. Thus ſhe got the character

character of good-nature, for forgiving her enemies, and pleading for them that had uſed her ill. By theſe artifices, ſhe impoſed upon Mrs. Auſtin, and was held up by her as a pattern for our imitation.

"I have never ſeen or heard any thing of her ſince, till I was ſurpriſed by her appearance this evening. I am ſhocked to hear on what a footing ſhe is in Sir James Lavington's family; you may depend upon it, ſhe has impoſed upon them by a *falſe character*; I think it a duty you owe Lady Lavington, as a friend and neighbour, to undeceive her in regard to this Ellinor, that ſhe may deſiſt from introducing ſo very improper a perſon to people of faſhion and conſequence. The change ſhe has brought about in the diſpoſition of Sir James, I ſhould ſuppoſe might be eaſily effected, by ſuch an *artful creature!*"

This converſation paſſed *loud* enough to be caught by Miſs Letitia Liptrap, the maiden of forty-five, before mentioned, who,

having announced Ellinor as an impoſtor, and a woman of intrigue, to her dear friend and contemporary, Lady Dorothy Clackit, who, like herſelf, had a mortal antipathy to youth and beauty; for, to depreciate theſe perfections, had long been their *only* gratification.

She immediately ſet about *denouncing* the guilt of the culprit to all who were in *her vicinity*; whilſt Miſs Letitia Liptrap, by ſome well-planned manœuvres, in frequently changing her poſition, contrived to do the ſame to the *oppoſite* rank of females, who all, from fifteen to fifty, were ſoon acquainted with the ſtory ſhe had heard, illuſtrated with embelliſhments, alterations, and explanations. Theſe, in gigling whiſpers, told it to the *men*, with a few additional ſtrictures, and good-natured comments.

Lady John Dareall, who enjoyed it as a good *joke*, that ſuch a young chit ſhould have had the wit to deceive thoſe lynx-eyed tabbies, beckoned to her Sir Harry Hurry, whom

whom ſhe addreſſed, laughing loudly; "ſo, you mad devil, here's good news for you; a flattering proſpect of amuſement for your idle hours this autumn; Letitia informs me, that walking piece of clock work, Sir James Lavington, has contrived to palm *his* miſtreſs on the old *ſour-crout* his wife, as a diſtreſſed orphan of an officer of rank. She has ſwallowed the bait, brought her down here, and introduced her to the whole country: did you ever meet her with them in town?"

"Oh yes, often; but I never heard the ſtory in the way you tell it, though every body thought the *old fox* was in love with her, becauſe ſhe *unkennelled* him who had ſo long been *earthed*, and run him through the covers of all the public places in London.—This will be glorious intelligence for the old everlaſting Duke of Southernwood, who is coming down to me next week, with a ſet of good fellows of his acquaintance. He was caſting an *eye* on her all laſt winter, but ſhe was ſo well guarded by old Formality, and

that preaching prig Howard, that ſhe was not *comeatable.* This news will rejoice his old heart, ſet his *ſolitary* twinkler a rolling, and make him dance a ſaraband to his own ſinging. Sir Jemmy cannot appear to feel angry that we ſtart for the plate, when he himſelf objected, laſt county meeting, to encloſing commons.

Her ladyſhip laughed at his account, and Sir Harry, encouraged by her approbation, thought himſelf a ſuperlative wit. To a few good natured *odd bodies*, that view the faults of their fellow mortals with levity, and excuſe them from charity, who have no conception how much ſcandal may be propagated in the ſhort ſpace of two hours, by *adepts* in the ſcience, to *ſuch* the rapid progreſs made in that time, towards the total demolition of our poor Heroine's character may appear aſtoniſhing; to the initiated in the myſtic ceremonies of the goddeſs of detraction, who mutilate, cut up, and annihilate a dozen female reputations in an evening,

evening, to theſe it will neither appear ſurpriſing or wonderful.

Campley, who had walked down the avenue with Sir Harry, after helping Ellinor into the carriage of Sir James Lavington, learnt from him the account he had juſt heard from Lady John Dareall. Though he anxiouſly wiſhed to find Ellinor as deſtitute of character as of fortune, he did not credit the improbable ſtory told by his wife, he expreſſed his aſtoniſhment, ſaid it was very odd; he did not know what to make of it. He would not appear to liſten to the ſcandal, though his plotting brain ſuggeſted to him at once the policy of its gaining belief, and being propagated through the county by the Baronet's ignorant garulity.

On entering the ſupper-room, he found his lady in the *ſulks*; whom he mortified by making no enquiry as to the cauſe, treating her with the moſt perfect *nonchalance*.—This behaviour threw her into a paroxyſm of

ſobs

ſobs and tears, that entirely diſcompoſed the etiquette of Mrs. Oſwald's table, " with much-admired diſorder."

Sir Chriſtopher now addreſſed the weeping fair one, " Why, don't cry, Mary; I did never ſee the like of this here: for a bride to be blubbering in the firſt week of the honey moon, who brought her huſband a hundred thouſand pounds, of *lawful* money of Great Britain, is, to my thinking, quite out of the queſtion."

" What, Sir, is the uſe of my fortune, if it cannot make me happy? if every little pert minx is to be preferred to *me*, and to be taken more notice of than I am, before my face, though ſhe has neither money nor character. But I am determined to be revenged, let what will be the conſequence."

" Why I am all along in the dark, Mary; I don't know what you mean. Tell me who has affronted you, and I will ſee you righted, never fear; and ſo will the Colonel *too*, who has ſworn to protect you, and all that there."

" That's

"That's mighty probable, when he laviſhes his compliments and careſſes on my greateſt enemy, that frightful, artful witch, Ellinor, who has given herſelf the name of Harcourt, and who had the aſſurance to come and viſit *me* this evening, with Sir James Lavington's family."

"Bleſs me, deary, you can't mean that nice-looking girl in white; why I thought ſhe looked a very modeſt innocent-looking body; and, ſo far from being ugly, to my thinking ſhe was the prettieſt laſs in the whole company."

This ſpeech brought upon him the exclamations of *all* his female auditors.

"You muſt ſurely be blind, brother.' Lord, Sir Chriſtopher, you be joking.' For ſhame papa, to affront me by ſuch an aſſertion." Each of the Miſs Oſwalds, drawing up their long necks, in imitation of their erect mamma, cried, "I wonder, uncle, at your bad taſte." While Sir Chriſtopher defended himſelf againſt

againſt the various attacks of his mortified aſſailants, Campley remained perfectly neuter: with moſt provoking compoſure devouring a white fricaſſee; and, having diluted it with a glaſs of the late Oporto merchant's *beſt* Burgundy, he thus addreſſed his enraged help-mate.

"My dear Mrs. Campley, I am perfectly at a loſs to define what it is you mean by this noiſe and abuſive clamour; ſo indecorous, and ſo unlike what I *fondly* flattered myſelf would ever be the behaviour of the woman I have the *felicity* to call wife, againſt the beautiful, elegant, unoffending, *well-bred* Miſs Harcourt, who is the perſon, according to what I can collect from this deſultory converſation, againſt whom you level your ſarcaſms, and hurl your anathemas.

You cannot injure her fame; depend upon it, the arrows you aim at her *breaſt* will recoil and wound your *own*. I muſt entreat, if your heart really harbours ſuch debaſing and direful inmates as envy and hatred, which you

you have ſo openly avowed, that you will take a leſſon from the great world, with whom you are *going to mix*, and conceal thoſe qualities that will ever make me bluſh for the woman I have ſelected as my partner for life. If thoſe dormant propenſities of your nature have been rouſed into action, by my attentions to the lady in queſtion this evening, I aſſure you, they were no more pointed or particular than you muſt expect to *ſee me* pay, as a debt of politeneſs, to every female of my acquaintance, It is what is expected from men of the world, whether married or ſingle.

When you have been introduced, and are accuſtomed to aſſociate with people of faſhion, you will ſee their behaviour in ſimilar ſituations, and then be convinced there was nothing in my conduct to Miſs Harcourt, but what was ſtrictly proper and unavoidable, to a young lady, with whom I was ſo frequently in company laſt winter, in public and private parties. Could I poſſibly only notice her by a bow *en-paſſant?* And I now call upon you,

Mrs.

Mrs. Campley, to declare what is your cauſe of quarrel againſt a woman ſo univerſally eſteemed and admired? I am at a loſs to deviſe your motives for ſuch antipathy, I have now *ſhewn cauſe* for my conduct this evening, and I expect *you* to do the ſame. I hope that you will be able to juſtify yourſelf from the charge of cruelty, in the puniſhment you have wantonly beſtowed upon Miſs Harcourt, who, I am convinced, whatever man ſhe makes *happy* with her hand, he will never experience the mortifying degradation of being aſhamed of *his choice.*"

Mrs. Campley, ſtruck dumb by the reproofs of her huſband, having liſtened to him in ſullen ſilence, now dried her ſwollen eyes, and blubbered cheeks, on which the ſalt tears, having made themſelves channels through the white, and red, with which they were plentifully plaſtered, gave her an appearance much reſembling a *freſh daubed* Cherokee Chief. She began the hiſtory of her firſt knowledge of Ellinor, which ſhe gave with all

all the additions and exaggerations her jealous malice could invent; the ſimple *facts* the reader was acquainted with in the early ſtage of this work.

When ſhe concluded her relation, Campley, ſhaking his head, exclaimed, "Are theſe *all* the high crimes and miſdemeanors you have to allege, to juſtify your acrimony towards Miſs Harcourt? Diveſted of embelliſhment, and tried by the ſtandard of truth, it amounts to *this*, that you were educated at the ſame ſchool, where you did not agree, becauſe *one* of you was ill-tempered, quarrelſome, and malicious; you accuſe her; ſhe perhaps may give you credit for theſe *agreemens*: wherever the fault lay, I dare ſay that her good ſenſe has long ceaſed to remember it. I am ſorry to find you vindictive after ſuch a lapſe of time.

Becauſe her relations did not appear, you ſuppoſe her to be illegitimate, though you allow ſhe was as amply provided for as any in the ſchool. Her delicate form, and refined manners, refute the ſup-

poſition

ſuppoſition of her being the offspring of low and vulgar parents; can you not, Mrs. Campley, be charitable enough to believe, that thoſe to whom ſhe owes her birth might be married, and yet have political reaſons for keeping it ſecret, without ſuppoſing them criminal? You allow that you have not heard or ſeen any thing of her from that time to the preſent evening. I can inform you, that ſhe finiſhed her education at a convent in France, which ſhe quitted to become an inmate of one of the moſt reſpectable gentleman's families in this kingdom. By every individual in it ſhe is admired, for the ſuavity of her manners, the graces of her perſon, and her general conduct; they will all unite in defending her character againſt your inſinuations, which it is evident cannot be ſupported by even an appearance of probability.

The natural conſequence of your imprudence I expect will be, that when Sir James, who avows himſelf her protector, is informed of the ſcandalous ſtories propagated by my wife, he will call me out, to take or loſe a life; you

you will then find that I was right in aſſerting, the weapon you aimed at her would recoil and wound *yourſelf*."

Mrs. Campley's fright at the conſequences of her tale, as pointed out by her huſband, at leaſt equalled her gratification in relating it; ſhe ſaid, that ſhe thought, from appearances, Miſs Harcourt was an improper connection for people of character; but, that if ſhe was ever to be the occaſion of her *dear* Edward's fighting a duel, ſhe ſhould expire with terror; and ſhe was ready to ſay, or do any thing, in her power to prevent ſuch a misfortune.

Campley told her, that he hoped, in future, ſhe would be more guarded in beſtowing her cenſures; that he would, next morning, wait upon Sir James and the ladies, to ſee what was to be done, but that he feared, as ſhe had made her accuſation in a public manner, he was apprehenſive that ſhe muſt ſuffer the mortification of making the

amende

amende honorable in the ſame place, and before the ſame company aſſembled.

" I don't know, Colonel," interrupted Lady Cayenne, " what you mean by making *amends*; but I hope you don't expect your wife to go for to *ax* pardon of ſuch a poor *bit* of trumpery as this Ellinor. Is the great city heireſs, the *dartur* of Sir Chriſtopher Cayenne, to condeſcend to *ſcuſe* herſelf to the company keeper of any Miſs in the pariſh? who, I dare to ſay, wears all the *caſt* clothes of her miſtreſs: is ſhe to *deſcend* to ſuch a ſort of a perſon as this?"

" Yes, Madam, it is her place, was ſhe the daughter and wife of a Duke, to ſolicit the pardon of her *cook-maid*, if ſhe had injured her character by an unjuſt accuſation; the ſhame would lie in the breach, not the performance, of this neceſſary duty. But our altercations are moſt diſagreeably interrupting other converſation, and intruding upon Mrs. Oſwald's hour of repoſe. He rung the

the bell for his valet, and bowing to the company, retired.

"I don't underſtand this ſame huſband of yours, Mary," ſaid her ladyſhip.

"But I do, wife, and clearly ſee what he has been ſaying is all true and right, and all that. Our daughter has been wrong all the way through; he will be maſter, and is determined ſhe ſhan't ſay *obey* for nothing; what's more, I am reſolved not to interfere between them; ſo Mary, dear, you know my mind; don't come with complaints to me, and all that ſort of thing; and I deſire, my lady, you don't encourage her in tale-bearing, for ſon-in-law ſeems to know very well how to *manage* his own family; and you ſee plainly you will only get the worſt of it by talking to him, as you will find him too much for you in the *argument* way."

This blunt leſſon effectually ſilenced her ladyſhip, and ſent Mrs. Campley to her chamber, where ſhe lay awake all night, ſtudying

ſtudying how ſhe ſhould in future *conceal* her bad propenſities, not how to conquer them: they had ſo "grown with her growth, and ſtrengthened with her ſtrength," that to part with them was the fartheſt of all things from her intentions.

Our readers will doubtleſs be aſtoniſhed, and with difficulty recogniſe Ellinor's powerful and apparently diſintereſted champion of this evening, in the machinating, artful, ſatirical Campley, whom they have formerly ſeen ſo ready to avail himſelf of her unprotected ſituation, and ſo deſirous of ſacrificing her innocence to his gratification. As he voluntarily ſtepped forward, and juſtified her in ſo honourable a manner, they may be induced to ſuppoſe him reformed from the evil of his former ways.

No ſuch thing; this diſciple of Cheſterfield was ſtill acting a character, only playing a part, that would ultimately aid the cauſe, of which he never loſt ſight. His pleading in defence of an oppreſſed young woman, even againſt his

beloved

beloved bride, would give a favourable opinion to his hearers, of the philanthropy and goodneſs of his diſpoſition, and the attentions he might hereafter pay Ellinor, would be placed to his earneſt wiſh of offering all the atonement in his power, as a recompenſe for the intended injuſtice of his wife, who, after what had paſſed, would not *dare* to complain. This occurrence gave him an opportunity of convincing her, under the appearance of affectionate advice, what a mean opinion he entertained, both of her *head* and *heart*; and the highly-coloured picture he drew of Ellinor, obliged her, in deſpite of *ſelf-love*, to draw a moſt mortifying compariſon between that lady and herſelf.

His conduct would alſo do him great credit with Sir James Lavington, and gain the ſmiles and confidence of Ellinor; for gratitude muſt induce her to grant *him* her friendſhip, who had ſo warmly and ſucceſsfully defended her, from whom ſhe had no right to expect ſuch lenity, who had, with

pointed ſcorn, rejected his devoirs.—Campley knew enough of the frailties of human nature, to be aſſured that the *beſt* of mere mortals feel a ſomething, *very like* gratification, at ſeeing the mortification of an unprovoked enemy, and a conſequent attachment to thoſe to whom they are indebted for their juſtification. Thus, by artful ſimulation, did Campley buy "golden opinions from all parties."

CHAP. V.

WHEN the family at Avon-Place were the next morning aſſembled in the breakfaſt-room, Auguſta repeated to her parents her converſation with Ellinor the preceding evening, who in a few minutes after entered the apartment. The fluſh of conſcious innocence tinged her cheek, while the proud triumph ſhe meditated of truth over deception lightened up her eyes with effulgent luſtre; and the rectitude of her intentions gave a firmneſs and grace to her whole figure, that ſtruck them with ſurpriſe and admiration; ſhe had never before appeared ſo intereſtingly lovely. To the kind inquiries of how ſhe had reſted after her

indiſpoſition, ſhe anſwered, that ſhe was quite reſtored to health, by a *calm* ſleep.

She took her place at the bottom of the table, and began her accuſtomed employment of making tea. Little converſation paſſed till the ſervant had removed the breakfaſt table; when, having ſilently ſtood a few minutes at an open window to recover the fortitude, with which ſhe had entered the room; for, during the ſpace of half an hour, it had a little *evaporated*, from not having been able immediately to commence her ſtory, ſhe returned to her former ſituation. The ladies had taken up their knotting, and Sir James the news-paper, that they might not appear to notice her apparent perturbation, when, placing her chair between Lady Lavington and her daughter, ſhe thus addreſſed the former:

"I feel conſcious, that the treatment I received laſt evening at Mrs. Oſwald's, through the unprovoked rude behaviour of Mrs

Mrs. Campley, and the evident effects it had upon my feelings, muſt have made me appear guilty of ſome crime of a very atrocious nature, to juſtify ſuch a cruel neglect, and to produce ſuch conſequences. The very idea of the ſentiments your ladyſhip *muſt* entertain of the child of your bounty, almoſt incapacitates me at this awful moment from relating my ſad ſtory, though it is a debt of gratitude to your unexampled kindneſs, and an act of juſtice due to myſelf, which only can explain, extenuate, or exculpate me, from the charges that may have been brought againſt me.

"By what I could collect from the audible whiſpers of Mrs. Oſwald's company, I was accuſed of having impoſed myſelf upon your family, under a character which I had no pretenſions to aſſume; that, deceived by my machinations, you had introduced me to your friends and acquaintance as a reſpectable young woman; that, inſtead of my being entitled to ſuch a diſtinction, I ought, as an

artful *impoſtor* to be hunted from all virtuous ſociety, and driven from your friendſhip and protection, with merited diſgrace and ignominy.

"That I know not to whom I belong, or upon whom I have any claims of conſanguinity, is moſt *true*; I was committed to the wide world, in which I was told that I muſt find my *own* place, without any other aſſiſtance than your ladyſhip's promiſed protection, which I muſt deſerve, by my ſubſequent conduct, is alſo moſt *true*; the tale that was told you of my parents, I was *forced* to repeat when your ſheltering roof received me; at that time I ſuſpected it to be *falſe*; the bitter regret I felt in joining in this impoſition, the Searcher of all hearts can only know. I was threatened with being totally diſcarded to want and miſery, if I did not obey this injunction. I agreed then to *act* as I was *commanded*. This is the *whole* of the fault I have committed. If I loſe your friendſhip, which has hitherto made me ſo happy, ſurely the ſeverity of the puniſhment

ment muſt be allowed to more than equal the offence. I laſt night came to the reſolution, that whatever might be the conſequence to *me*, your character ſhould no longer ſuffer by my deception. I will therefore relate all I know of myſelf from my earlieſt remembrance, which alone can explain the events leading to the preſent *criſis*, that appears to be the æra of my fate; by this only can you determine whether I am moſt to be pitied or blamed.

"I know my preſent hearers will forgive and commiſerate the victim of impoſed ſecrecy, who, owing to the impenetrable veil of myſtery thrown over her from the hour of her birth, has never felt the ineffable delight of being folded in the arms of a father, or preſſed with pleaſure to the maternal boſom of a fond mother; who never received that ſpur to improvement, a rewarding ſmile from the authors of her exiſtence.

"My heart, naturally tender and ſuſceptible, *pined* even in early childhood, on finding myſelf a ſolitary being, a link torn

from the chain of cauſes and events, that appeared to unite the fate of *all* others. I ſighed for ſome kind relations, who would take me to their arms, and beſtow on me the careſſes of approbation, for my little efforts at improvement, and receive in return all the grateful love with which my young heart was fraught. Alas! it was never given me to experience what appeared in theory ſo delightful, which my ſenſations bid me look to as my higheſt gratification.

"In early infancy, an alien from all to whom I belonged, left to the care of venal hirelings, each revolving year, that my mind expanded, I ſaw and felt more poignantly the miſery of my deſerted ſtate; I found myſelf a mere atom in creation, of no conſequence to any *one*; my intellectual endowments were not inquired after; to feed and clothe me ſeemed all that was thought neceſſary by thoſe who paid for my ſupport.

"As I frequently meditated on my ſituation, I was ever impreſſed with the *preſentiment* that, at ſome future period, I ſhould

be acknowledged by my parents; as 'pride, beſtowed on all, a common friend,' would not allow me to ſuppoſe them among the lower ranks of ſociety: this idea determined me to learn with attention all I was taught, that, when the time ſo ardently expected ſhould arrive, of being received to their arms, they might bluſh for *their* neglect of me, not for *my* ignorance. Thus vanity was my only comforter, and goaded me on to attempt excelling my contemporaries, to oppoſe with all my little power the inſults my ſituation conſtantly expoſed me to bear, from thoſe who, feeling the conſequence derived from parents, relations, and friends, treated with deriſion the child ſuppoſed to have neither—the *little Ellinor, that belonged to nobody*; which was the kind appellation given me by the more fortunate Mrs. Campley, *ci-devant*, Mary Cayenne; then, as now, my profeſſed enemy.

"If ſuch, as I have experienced and deſcribed, are the taunts and humiliating mortifications *all* unfortunate children are ex-

poſed to ſuffer, whoſe parents have deviated from the ſtrict line of rectitude, then indeed the ſins of the *firſt* generation are puniſhed in the *ſecond*; but, how thoſe, to whoſe follies they are the innocent victims, can deſert them to all the ignominy of their birth, is to me inexplicable! Surely, in the eyes of a merciful God, ſuch conduct muſt be an aggravation of the crime by which they were produced. I am not aſſured, that I am the offspring of illegitimacy; nor have I any reaſon to ſuppoſe ſo, but from the cruel ſarcaſms of the world."

Here the tears of Ellinor, that had flowed for the greater part of the time ſhe had addreſſed her auditors, at the retroſpection of what ſhe had, and what ſhe ſtill might have to ſuffer, almoſt ſuffocated her; nor did ſhe weep alone, as both the ladies were deeply affected by her appeal to their ſympathy.

Sir James had for ſome time retired to the door that opened upon the lawn, having

having experienced a ſenſation which prevented reſpiration, for which he ſought the benefit of air. As ſhe pronounced the laſt ſentence, he ſeemed as much overpowered by his feelings as herſelf. Lady Lavington and Auguſta requeſted her to delay the further recital of her ſtory, till ſhe regained more ſpirits and compoſure.

"I thank you, ladies, for your kind conſideration; but it is now become abſolutely neceſſary, that you ſhould be acquainted with every thing that relates to me, and that *directly*, before you again meet Mrs. Campley." Having drank a glaſs of water, ſhe proceeded to give an account of herſelf to the time ſhe entered Groſvenor Street, in the ſame terms as ſhe had done to Howard; but of her meeting with that gentleman ſubſequent to her ſeeing him with Colonel Campley, or of his addreſſes to her ſince, ſhe did not ſpeak, as it formed no part of her hiſtory that it was neceſſary they ſhould be made acquainted with, eſpecially as ſhe had refuſed to accept his offered hand.

In the courſe of her narrative, her hearers were roufed to anger againſt her unfeeling guardian, ſoftened into pity and commiſeration for her, and felt the moſt ſovereign contempt for the *honourable* Mrs. Campley. They acquitted Ellinor of all blame in joining to impoſe on them; aſſured her, that, ſituated as ſhe was, it was impoſſible for her to act otherwiſe than ſhe had done; they laviſhed the higheſt encomiums on the propriety of her whole conduct in ſuch trying ſituations, and beſtowed the greateſt praiſe on that ſenſe of honour, rectitude and *truth*, that had impelled her to make the preſent candid confeſſion.

Sir James thanked her for the confidence ſhe had placed in them, told her it ſhould be kept as a ſacred depoſit, recommended it to her to let it reſt with the preſent company, by which ſhe might probably avert thoſe conſequences to herſelf, or friends, with which her guardian had threatened her on the promulgation of her ſecret.

At

At this unexpected turn of fortune in her favour, she felt her more oppressive than her recent sorrow had been; she could not find terms to express the enthusiasm of her gratitude; she embraced in ecstasy the knees, and kissed the hands, of Lady Lavington, while she called down a thousand blessings on Sir James. Wild with rapture, she shed the delicious tears of renovated *hope* on the neck of Augusta, who, when strained to her bosom, mingled her's with them.

Thus, her heart lightened of a corrosive secret, by which it had long been oppressed, made happy in her conduct being approved by friends whom she loved and honoured, who promised her a continuation of their protection; she trod on air; "her bosom's lord sat lightly on its throne:" the present moment appeared to be, the first in which she could be said to *live*.

Sir James now observed to Lady Lavington, that some feasible story must be told to counteract

counteract what Mrs. Campley's malice had propagated. "I have thought of one that can injure no perſon, which will reſtore to ſociety ſo valuable a member as this unjuſtly perſecuted young creature; and I know, for ſuch a conſideration, you will have no objection to aſſiſt me."

Lady Lavington promiſed to act as he deſired. Sir James ſaid, "that ſhe muſt ſee Mrs. Oſwald as ſoon as poſſible, and reſent the treatment Miſs Harcourt, her *protegee*, received laſt night at the abbey; when ſhe repeats Mrs. Campley's tale, you will then juſtify Ellinor, and account for the myſterious duct obſerved when ſhe was at the ſame ſchool with her niece; by ſaying that her father was a younger brother of a family of diſtinction, an officer in the army, who had privately married the beautiful daughter of a country clergyman, blinded by his love to the conſequences he might experience from the diſapprobation of his proud relations, he made her his wife, on condition it ſhould be

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kept a profound ſecret; and as the ceremony took place in a country town, where he was then recruiting, far removed from the capital, he thought this might be eaſily accompliſhed.

"Soon after he became a huſband, he was ordered to America: Mrs. Harcourt being pregnant, it was agreed that ſhe ſhould remain in England till after her *accouchement*, and then follow him acroſs the Atlantic: which ſhe did after the birth of Ellinor, who was committed to the care of her grandmother, and placed by her at a proper age, with Mrs. Auſtin, where ſhe was known only by her chriſtian name. The other part of her *title* was liberally given her by Miſs Cayenne: that it was her misfortune to loſe both her parents in that country, where deſtructive war made ſo many parents childleſs, children orphans, and wives widows.

"Captain Harcourt was mortally wounded at the battle of Brandywine; her mother, who before that period had been thought

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to be in a conſumption, brought on by the fatigue, cold and hardſhips that a delicate woman is inevitably expoſed to in an enemy's country, lived but one week after ſhe cloſed the eyes of her huſband. The ſmall fortune that her father could leave his daughter, was not ſufficient to maintain her equal to the education he had ordered her to receive, as he hoped ſhe would, at ſome future period, be acknowledged by his relations. That you, having heard her ſtory, and admiring her talents, had received her into your family, as an eligible companion to your daughter."—This plan for their future operations was but juſt ſettled, and the ladies retired to dreſs, when a ſervant announced Colonel Campley.

This gentleman immediately entered upon his miſſion, by enquiring after the ladies, and hoping Miſs Harcourt was recovered from her laſt night's indiſpoſition. Sir James anſwered him coldly and diſtantly, that ſhe was perfectly well.

"Come,

"Come, my dear ſir, I ſee that you are offended; act with your accuſtomed juſtice, and condemn not the innocent for the guilty: let me not loſe your good opinion for the ill conduct of my wife; which, as I did not hear of till it was paſſed, I could not avert: I have done every thing in my power to prevent its repetition in future. No perſon can be more hurt at the unmerited ill treatment Miſs Harcourt received from Mrs. Campley than myſelf; no ſooner was I made acquainted with it, than I pointedly expreſſed my utter abhorrence of ſuch calumny, and inſiſted the author of it ſhould do every thing in her power to make reparation.

"Mrs. Campley is perfectly aſhamed of her behaviour, which I find aroſe from ſchool pique, and misinformation about Miſs Harcourt's real pretenſions. I come in her name, to offer all proper conceſſions to Lady Lavington and yourſelf; and am inveſted with *full powers* to treat for a *ſeparate peace* with

with Miſs Harcourt, to whom Mrs. Campley is both willing and deſirous to make ample apologies in any terms, or in any way, ſhe, or you, ſhall dictate.

"I wiſh alſo, Sir James, as this affront was publicly given, to conſult with you on the beſt method to be adopted to prevent Miſs Harcourt's receiving any injury from the ſtory being propagated through the *galloping* morning calls of that ſatirical maſculine devil Lady John Dareall; or the more gentle *amblings* of that ſtale piece of virginity Miſs Letitia Liptrap, her *confidante* and neighbour. I find, upon enquiry, that the two of the party who made themſelves moſt buſy, were the latter, and Lady Dorothy Clackit: by the perſevering induſtry of theſe *frightful tabbies*, to whom the love of miſchief gives activity, when the reputation of a beautiful and accompliſhed woman is to be *run down* by theſe female hunters, every thing is to be feared from their united exertions; no time is to be loſt in convincing them that they were on a wrong *ſcent*."

Sir

Sir James, who was much pleaſed with the candour of Campley's conduct, ſpared his feelings by not ſaying how much he deſpiſed his wife for her illiberality. He availed himſelf of the preſent opportunity of recounting the hiſtory of Ellinor's parents in the ſame words he had repeated to Lady Lavington; adding, under the ſeal of ſecrecy, that Harcourt was not the real name of her late father; but, for political reaſons, ſhe had not taken that of her family, till acknowledged by them. Sir James requeſted Campley to relate to the company at Morton Abbey this information, as it would properly diſpel the myſtery that had hitherto appeared to attend the birth of Ellinor.

It was now propoſed by Sir James, and acceded to by Campley, that all the company that were preſent at Mrs. Oſwald's, who had witneſſed Ellinor's diſgrace, ſhould be directly invited to dine at Avon Place; where Mrs. Campley, making the beſt excuſes

cuſes the nature of her conduct would admit, in which ſhe might plead her having been impoſed upon by falſe information, ſhould aſk Ellinor's pardon; while Sir James, to ſtrengthen this, ſhould repeat the ſtory he had juſt told Campley. This appeared to both the gentlemen the only method that could be purſued, to act as an antidote to expel the poiſon Mrs. Campley had adminiſtered.

The young ladies now appeared, equipped or their morning ride. After the Colonel had paid his compliments, he took his leave without ſaying any thing to Ellinor of what had paſſed the laſt evening, properly *judging* that his wife's apologies, and the future arrangements, would be better related to her by Sir James than himſelf, who immediately on his quitting the room, ſpoke in the higheſt terms of panegyric on his very proper behaviour upon his wife's conduct, which muſt have been very diſagreeable to him. Sir James then acquainted Lady Lavington

with what had been planned between them, to clear the doubts reſpecting Ellinor's character, that muſt have ariſen from the malicious reports of Mrs. Campley; when, patting our Heroine on the cheek, he bid her be of good comfort, for ſhe would ſee the mighty mortified in the conceſſions that lady would be obliged publicly to make; and ſhe would ſoon be reinſtated in the good opinion of all thoſe with whom ſhe had meant to do her an injury.

"Ah, my dear Sir James, you reckon on the good-natured part of the community, who, like the preſent company, feel their higheſt gratification in the triumph of innocence over oppreſſion. Even in my little intercourſe with the world, I have been compelled to obſerve, that thoſe form the ſmalleſt part of its inhabitants,—that the pleaſures of three parts out of four conſiſt, not in raiſing the fallen, or ſupporting the weak, but, by falſehood and ſatire, levelling their characters to their ſituation; determined that what appears to them ſo unnatural a junction as merit

merit and poverty, ſhall, by their conſent, never be formed; thus, by the *ariſtocracy* of wealth and power, they *cruſh* what they ſhould *cheriſh*, the ſeeds of genius, the bloſſoms of ſcience, and the fruit of talents. Thinking thus of human nature in general, what am I to expect from Mrs. Campley's juſtifying *me*, whom ſhe ſo lately inſulted? Her excuſes will appear to be extorted by fear; the hearers, convinced of this, will depart, placing the revocation of her original ſcandal to its true cauſe, determined not to be convinced againſt their will, or obliged to unſay ſo delectable a piece of ſcandal, that they had almoſt knocked up their coach-horſes in driving round the neighbourhood to circulate."

"I am ſorry, Miſs Harcourt," replied Sir James, who had looked very ſerious while ſhe was ſpeaking, "to ſee you indulge, at your time of life, ſuch cynical ideas, and querulous complaints, againſt a world you are but juſt entering. I allow your ſex are but too apt to be gratified, by hearing and repeating

repeating what enables them to exert their ſatirical talents; and, though I think it a *crime*, I hope it is not of ſuch a *powerful magnitude* as you deſcribe: nor can I ſuppoſe, when *I* repeat your ſtory, that it will not be credited by its hearers; this, joined by the apologies of Mrs. Campley, doubtleſs you will be perfectly exculpated. Nor can even my partiality make me think you totally free from thoſe ſatirical propenſities you condemn the world for indulging, when you attack with ſuch bitter acrimony three fourths of its inhabitants, becauſe, from a contingency of unfortunate events, your fate has thrown you into the power of the weak and wicked.

"It is too ſoon, my dear child, (ſeeing her in tears at his reproofs) for you to encourage ſuch miſanthropic, ideal, and gloomy notions of the depravity of human nature; to depreſs your naturally lively ſpirits, and render uſeleſs your fine talents, by enveloping your mind in the clouds of diſtruſt, and the miſeries attending a conſtant life of ſuſpicion.

"Youth

"Youth is the ſeaſon of candour and unſuſpecting innocence: doing no ill, it fears none; light as the roſy-fingered hours, it cheerfully ſports through the day, and calmly ſlumbers through the night. This, my dear girls, forms the halcyon joys of early life, which, in riper years, we view with ſo much pleaſure in the proſpect, and keenly regret it was of ſo *ſhort* a duration. Believe me, it is better to be *deceived* by too good an opinion of our friends, than conſigned to the miſery of *conſtantly* guarding our words and actions through *fear* of impoſition.

"Caution, like avarice, is the vice and the curſe of *age*; oh, let it not rob you of all the good and genuine feelings of your hearts,—embitter all the joys of youth, and conſign you over a prey to melancholy, and its attendant ſatellite, *deſpair*. Rather encourage all the *lively emotions* of your mind; enjoy the innocent pleaſures they will not fail to procure you; be thankful to the almighty Ruler of the Univerſe for the bleſſings he has beſtowed; murmur not for

thoſe he has, for unfathomable reaſons, withheld: addreſs him humbly in the hour of trouble, in the full aſſurance, the grateful cheerful oriſons of thanks for benefits received, or the petition of the ſorrowing heart in the hour of trial, for chriſtian fortitude, will not aſcend to his everlaſting throne in vain."

Ellinor, whoſe bright eyes were ſuffuſed with tears, and whoſe cheeks glowed with the bluſhes of conſcious ſhame, for having given occaſion for the firſt reproof, or appearance of anger, ſhe had ever experienced from Sir James, felt ſhe muſt have been very culpable to have induced him to ſpeak harſhly to one for whom he had ever ſhewn ſuch marked partiality. His cenſures ſunk deep into her mind, whilſt his kindneſs and good counſel melted her heart, and determined her that in future it ſhould be the guide of her actions—that the monitions of the man on earth ſhe moſt

revered, ſhould not be loſt upon an ingrate.

As ſoon therefore as ſhe recovered the power of utterance, ſhe exclaimed, "pray, Sir James, forgive, and reſtore to your good opinion, the poor Ellinor; excuſe the irritability of her nature, by which ſhe has been propelled to turn upon her purſuers; but the leſſon you have this day kindly given her, ſhall be treaſured in her breaſt, and its tenour the *pharos* to guide her through life. It will teach ſo fallible a mortal to bear with the faults of others; nor expect that perfection to which ſhe has ſo little pretenſions. If you will for once allow the perſecutions to which ſhe has been expoſed from early exiſtence, to plead in extenuation of her petulance, ſhe will never again give you occaſion of complaint, but will try to bear her deſtiny with patient fortitude, till that Being whom you have taught her to invoke, ſhall, in his own time, deliver her

her from the oppreſſion of her fellow-creatures."

Sir James told her it was impoſſible to be long angry with one who confeſſed her faults with ſo much candour, and pleaded ſo gracefully for forgiveneſs. Cards were now diſpatched to the neighbouring gentry, requeſting the honour of their company to dinner the day after the morrow, in which the gueſts at Morton Abbey were not forgotten.

CHAP. VI.

ON the day appointed for Mrs. Campley's apologies, as the dinner hour approached, Ellinor's courage began to fail; ſhe ſtarted at the ſound of every carriage that drew up; and it was not, till from her window ſhe had ſeen thoſe of Colonel Campley, Sir Chriſtopher, and Mrs. Oſwald, the laſt that arrived, that Auguſta's entreaties, aided by hartſhorn, could prevail upon her to think of deſcending to the drawing-room.

She dreaded to meet the gaze of the company on the conſpicuous part ſhe was going to

to perform. She trembled for herſelf, and felt pity for the ridiculous point of view in which Mrs. Campley's late behaviour would now place them both; while Auguſta proteſted that Ellinor had a moſt happy knack of tormenting herſelf, and refining on miſery. In the preſent inſtance, ſhe certainly miſtook the character ſhe had to perform; in her idea it was Mrs. Campley who ought to feel ſhame; ſhe was not going to make, but to receive apologies, from a mortified and humbled enemy.

At this part of the argument, Sir James knocked at the door of the dreſſing-room; telling Ellinor he came to lead her to the company. To ſpare the delicacy of her feelings as much as poſſible, he had already told her ſtory, and mitigated, as much as the nature of the caſe would admit, the malicious part Mrs. Campley had acted; they now were all anxiouſly expecting her to to receive their excuſes. She could only ſay, "Sir James, you are the moſt conſiderate

and firſt of created beings, fated to be my guardian angel." He took her hand, and Auguſta's, and led them to the drawing-room. Ellinor looked moſt intereſtingly beautiful, dreſſed in a clear muſlin chemiſe, confined by a white ſilk cord and taſſels; her fine hair, which fell below her waiſt, dropped in curls upon her forehead, had neither powder nor ornament, but helped to ſhew her tranſparent ſkin to the beſt advantage.—Thus modeſt, innocent, and unaſſuming, appeared the intended victim of Mrs. Campley's malice; while ſhe, loaded with gorgeous finery, and glittering in the ſpoils of Golconda's mines, ſat as if ſhe imagined the ſumptuouſneſs of her appearance could hide or leſſen the degradation ſhe was about to ſuffer.

Ellinor, ſupported by her patron, and Auguſta, felt her courage return, and that her preſence of mind, and ſelf-conſequence, would not, like fickle friends, forſake her in the hour of danger; ſhe therefore, in

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a modeſt but firm manner, walked in, and took her place at the lower end of the apartment. On her entrance, an awful ſilence prevailed, when Colonel Campley roſe, took the hand of his lady, and led her, tottering under fear and finery, to our Heroine,—who, generouſly feeling for a *fallen* enemy, haſtily quitted her ſeat, met her in the middle of the room, gracefully offered her hand, and prevented the apologies Mrs. Campley was unſucceſsfully attempting to articulate, by thus addreſſing her:—

"I beg, Madam, that you will not ſay one word: I ſeek not your diſgrace, but my own juſtification, which I truſt has been already effected by the beſt of friends. If, through his exertions, I am reſtored to the good opinion of this circle (modeſtly curtſeying) I have nothing more to wiſh, only that from this time I may have the honour of being numbered amongſt the friends of Mrs. Campley."

Before the lady ſhe addreſſed could recover her ſurpriſe at a behaviour ſo very different from what would have been her own, in a ſimilar ſituation, or make any reply,—the admiration of the whole aſſembly, at Ellinor's conduct, broke forth in a torrent of applauſe, that bore down every thing before it; for a faſhionable, like a vulgar mob, is uſually ſwayed by the laſt ſpeaker; their approbation of the idols of their choice being equally vehement, with their acrimony towards the objects of their diſguſt. This fluctuation of public caprice was experienced by Ellinor, in the preſent inſtance: the women overwhelmed her with careſſes, as if they meant to bury their late behaviour under a heap of favours; they extolled her for acting as *near* perfection as *human frailty* admits; declared her to be a *model* of prudence for all young women to keep in view, whoſe merit claimed protection, and whoſe ſupport depended upon their own energies.

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The men vowed in raptures, that no fair one, in hiſtory or romance, was to be compared to her: ſhe was all goodneſs, grace, and beauty, an earth-treading ſtar, the peerleſs Princeſs of the conquering Norman's green domain!

Thus the identical Ellinor, poſſeſſing the ſame graces, merit, and talents, was now to be immortalized, who, only three days before, was, by this very company, black-balled from their ſociety—voted to Coventry, *denounced* as a low creature, an impoſtor, with whom it would be diſgraceful to aſſociate—and by one of the capricious turns of fortune's wheel, ſhe is now as much exalted *above* human nature, as ſhe was lately degraded *below* it, in the ſcale of exiſtence.

What is this fame, this good opinion of the world, to obtain which we waſte the preponderating midnight lamp? that is acquired with ſo much toil, and loſt with ſo much eaſe; for which we live ſubjected to the will of others; fearing

to leave the beaten track, to indulge the moſt innocent eccentricities of a playful fancy, or the caprices of a vivid imagination—though theſe form the beſt part of our enjoyments in this ſhort life,—becauſe it is not exactly the uſages of the world, and we muſt ſacrifice to its imperious mandate all the zig-zag circumvolutions that conſtitute our happineſs. Is it worth the purchaſe, to forego our own ſentiments, and adopt thoſe of the public voice? to live in a continual warfare, between what *that* wills right, and what our own ideas of rectitude, whiſper our hearts *is* ſo? yet, if not of conſequence, why purſue the inflated bubble, worldly approbation? which we have juſt ſeen—a breath can give, and a breath deſtroy!

When the clamorous acclamations were a little ſubſided, and Mrs. Campley had murmured through her teeth to Ellinor, "that ſhe was *vaſtly* ſorry for what had paſſed, was *vaſtly* happy to ſee her, and ſhould be *vaſtly* glad to renew their former

mer *friendſhip*," Sir James propoſed, that all paſſed animoſity ſhould, from that hour, be buried in eternal oblivion, and the preſent time be dedicated to feſtive mirth, and innocent hilarity. He added, what think you, young folks, of a little concert, to conclude with a dance on the ſod? This charming propoſal, that was received without one diſſentient voice, completely baniſhed all ſombre ideas; but not one heart of the whole party felt more light and happy than Ellinor's; to find herſelf, from being pointed at by the finger of ſcorn, ſo ſuddenly reſtored with the moſt brilliant *eclat*, and with the united approbation of all parties, to the good opinion of her friends, was to her the ſupreme of felicity.

After partaking of a ſumptuous dinner, where wit and cheerfulneſs preſided, and gave a zeſt to the viands, they retired to what was called the Druid's Temple, ſituated on a riſing knoll, in the centre of a wood of oaks, which towered majeſtically in age;

being coeval with the anceſtors of Sir James, with whom they flouriſhed, and who had preſerved them from groaning under the oppreſſive axe, with as ſuperſtitious a reverence, as did our forefathers, ere Britiſh hardihood yielded to Roman luxury, when, in groves like theſe, their prayers aroſe from "Nature, up to Nature's God."

The building was octagon, with latticed windows of gilt wire, that opened from the top to the bottom, luxuriouſly ornamented with eglantine, jaſſamine, and roſes, which kept it cool, and ſhed a delicious fragrance around. From viſtas of trees in various directions, the eye caught beautiful and pictureſque views of the ſurrounding country. In the inſide ſtood in niches ſome fine antique ſtatues, brought from Rome by Sir James, and others, excellent copies; among which number were the Apollo Belvidere, and the Venus de Medicis. In the centre of the room, on a pedeſtal, was a figure of the God of Harmony, with his harp, finely

finely executed in Parian marble. In this enchanting ſpot they had their muſical parties, ever ſince the family's arrival at Avonplace, where they now performed a delightful concert, in which the winged tenants of the grove ſtrained their little throats to bear a part.

Ellinor called forth all her talents, and exerted all her powers to give pleaſure to the company who had ſo recently joined to do her honour: ſhe had induced Sir James to purchaſe a harp for Miſs Lavington; ſhe herſelf had learnt to play upon that delightful inſtrument when in France, and had offered to inſtruct her friend. Ellinor now executed a ſonata, and accompanied herſelf while ſhe ſung ſeveral ſongs, in which ſhe diſplayed much taſte and judgment. The finale was a well ſung glee, in which the bridegroom took a part; but his bride's attainments were ſo truly below mediocrity, that no pleaſure could be derived from her futile attempts, though ſhe was depreſſed by

no

no *mauvaiſe honte*; but fully confident of her own powers of pleaſing, when called on, ſat down to the piano-forte, and without feeling one *pang* of remorſe, moſt barbarouſly *murdered* Krumpholtz's divine concerto, and, with equal coolneſs and intrepidity, *executed* the "*dove ſei*" of Handel, in the ſtrains of a raven in an ague fit; while the mortified Campley was writhing in exceſs of torture at this ſpecimen of his wife's muſical abilities.

They now repaired to the ſpot appropriated to their *al freſco* ball: it was a lawn in front of the houſe; the evening was clear and ſerene; the moon ſhone refulgent; not a zephyr diſturbed the trees, which were hung with lamps, tables ſpread under them and refreſhments of all ſorts, the fineſt fruits in ſeaſon, ices, &c. It was agreed by all the company, that ceremony ſhould be laid aſide for the evening, and, like the rural nymphs and ſwains they meant to imitate, they ſhould baniſh conſtraint, and be merry and happy

happy. The tabor and pipe ſtruck up Money-muſk, and the gentlemen ſelected their partners; Campley offered his hand to Ellinor: the hopeful heir of Morton Abbey, who had been ſent for from Oxford, to meet his new *quality* relations, preſented his to Miſs Lavington, while Sir Harry Hurry took out the bride, who, with his violent ſpirits and boiſterous mirth, he dragged about, and twirled round with a velocity very annoying to the good order of her ſumptuous apparel, of which ſhe made moſt doleful complaints, till, in an unfortunate caper, this unlucky ſon of fun and frolic contrived, in his deſcent, to plunge his foot through the gold muſlin train of his partner; and, before her piteous ſcreams had procured her any aſſiſtance, his eager and awkward efforts to extricate himſelf from the durance in which he was held, that he might be ready to turn Ellinor, who was coming down the dance, occaſioned him to completely carry away, twiſted round his leg, what he elegantly called Mrs. Campley's *body clothes*.

The women now crouded round to condole her on this irremediable misfortune, calling Sir Harry a careleſs brute, and a violent ſavage; while he, laughing loudly, exclaimed, "On my ſoul, I could not help it; I beg your pardon, Mrs. Campley; but you muſt blame yourſelf for dreſſing in ſuch gilded gimcracks: whenever I marry, my wife ſhall wear clothes that will bear a good romping bout; for what pleaſure can a man have in dancing with a partner, near whom he is afraid to move his legs, for fear of tearing her laces and furbelows, and who wont exert herſelf with any life or ſpirit, leſt ſhe ſhould ſpoil her finery. Why, there's Miſs Harcourt, ſhe's a girl after my own heart, who has been footing it away in her ſhift, light as a graſshopper, without fear or care."

"For ſhame, Sir Harry—what are you ſaying?" cried Campley.

"Why, what's the odds, Colonel, whether you call a dreſs by its Engliſh or its *French* name; it is ſtill the ſame thing, is it not?"

Here,

Here, with the moſt provoking apathy, he ſet about picking up the fragments of Mrs. Campley's tattered robe, and preſenting them to her, hoped it was *mendable*.

The company now reſumed their dancing; but Mrs. Campley could not be prevailed on to exhibit her paraphernalia in the group. Lady John Dareall, ſeeing her favourite *thrown* out, addreſſed him with, "Come to me, you unfortunate knight; look not ſo woeful wan; I will procure you a partner," making a movement to preſent him to the upright Miſs Letitia Liptrap.

"Hollo! Lady John, what do you mean? Think you any thing ſhall bring me into contact with that frozen piece of chaſtity, who would be ſwimming in the minuet ſtep of my great grandmother, round the firſt couple, while I ſhould be twirling about ſome laughing little devil at the bottom.—No, curſe me if I do:" ſaying which, he was off in a moment, and the next ſaw him

ſnatch

ſnatch the hand of Emma Oſwald, and join the feſtive throng.

"Go thy ways, *Orſon*; to attempt humaniſing thee," cried her ladyſhip, "would be the extreme of folly; it would be ſpoiling a ſtaunch pointer, by making him a lap-dog."

While the dancers were as happy as youth, cheerfulneſs, and good-humour could make them, thoſe who declined that amuſement formed themſelves into converſation parties. Lady John took the arm of the forſaken maiden, the fair Letitia, and ſtrolled into the wood to comment on paſt occurrences of the day.

Whilſt the parties amuſe themſelves with their different purſuits, we will give a ſketch of the character of Lady John Dare-all, as a beacon to parents in the education of their children, to prevent their reverſing the order of nature, by making their girls maſculine,

culine, and their boys feminine; the conſequences of which will be fully exemplified in the conduct and eccentricity of Lady John, which we ſhall give in its genuine colours, profeſſing to draw characters as *they are*, and *the world as it is*; wiſhing to convince our young readers, who, like her ladyſhip, think to charm by *notoriety*, that they widely miſtake the road. A woman never appears ſo truly irreſiſtible in the eyes of men of ſenſe, as when employed in fulfilling the taſk aſſigned her by nature—as a dutiful daughter, affectionate ſiſter, faithful wife, tender mother, and ſincere friend. If ſhe acts well in thoſe various ſituations, ſhe will be rewarded, by the love and admiration of the eſtimable part of the creation, and the applauſe of her own heart.

CHAP. VII.

LADY JOHN DAREALL was the only child of a gentleman of large fortune, in Hampſhire, who, being a perfect Nimrod in the chaſe, and doatingly fond of her, having no ſon to initiate in his favourite purſuits, or to participate with him the pleaſures of hunting and ſhooting, ſeeing his daughter a fine robuſt girl, determined to bring her up in the place of one; and, as ſhe had ſtrong animal ſpirits, great muſcular ſtrength, and rude health, ſhe preferred partaking the field ſports of her father, to the leſſon of her French governeſs and dancing-maſter, or being confined to work at the tambour-frame

frame of her mother; in ſpite of whoſe gentle remonſtrances Mr. Hawthorn, aided by the inclinations of his romping daughter, vowed he would have his plan of education adopted. In conſequence, at fifteen, ſhe would take the moſt deſperate leaps, and clear a five-barred gate with the keeneſt fox-hunter in the county. She was always in at the death; was reckoned the beſt ſhot within a hundred miles; having once levelled her death-dealing tube, the fate of the feathered tribe was inevitable, as the ſpoils ſhe exultingly diſplayed ſufficiently teſtified, when ſhe turned out her nets to her admiring father.

At ſeventeen, Harriet Hawthorn, early habituated to exerciſe, had never felt the baleful curſe of ill-health, that exterminator of every comfort; her height was five feet eight, her perſon finely formed; ſhe had a commanding and majeſtic appearance; from the freedom of her education, which had baniſhed *mauvaiſe honte*, ſhe had acquired a

firm

firm tone of voice, an impreſſive manner of delivering her ſentiments, which, if it did not always carry conviction to her auditors, helped to awe them into ſilence. Her complexion was that of a bright brunette; on her cheeks glowed the rich tints of health, laid on by Aurora as ſhe hailed the roſy-fingered goddeſs's approach on the upland lawn. Her eyes were of the darkeſt hazle, full of fire and intelligence; her noſe Grecian; her hair a gloſſy cheſnut, which flowed in luxuriant profuſion upon her fine-formed ſhoulders, in all its native graces, as ſhe never would conſent to its being tortured into the fantaſtic forms, dictated by the ever varying goddeſs Faſhion, to her votaries.

Her mind partook of the energies of her body; it was ſtrong, nervous, maſculine; ſhe had a quick perception of character, a lively wit, which ſhe expreſſed in flowing and animated language. Unuſed from early life to reſtraint, ſhe could never be induced to put any on her words and actions; but

but had to the preſent moment done and ſaid whatever ſtruck her fancy, heedleſs of the world's opinion, which ſhe treated with the moſt ſovereign contempt.

At the period we have mentioned, ſhe met at a fox chaſe the father of Sir Harry Hurry, a handſome young man juſt come to age, with whom ſhe was charmed by ſeeing him take a moſt deſperate leap, in which none but herſelf had the courage to follow him. Mutually pleaſed with each other's proweſs, and bold daring, from that time they became conſtant companions; they hunted, ſhot, and played backgammon together; and as the eſtates joined, and their purſuits were ſo congenial, the neighbourhood pronounced it a *match*. At this criſis the lovers were divided by 'Squire Hawthorn's being ordered to Bath by his phyſicians, after having had a ſevere fit of his old enemy, the gout, in his ſtomach. To expel this *foe* to man, from the ſeat of life to the extremities, he was ſent

to

to drink the waters of Bladud's fount; tho' in the 'Squire's opinion, old Madeira would have been much more pleaſant, and of equal utility; but the faculty perſiſted, and he was compelled to yield: he would not go without his darling Harriet, deprived of whoſe ſociety he could not exiſt a ſingle day.

This was Miſs Hawthorn's firſt introduction to the faſhionable world, except at an aſſize, a race, or an election ball. It was all, to her, new and wonderful; ſhe was at firſt amuſed by the novelty and ſplendour of the gay city of Bath, that emporium of cards, ſcandal, and ceremony. With her ideas of *free agency*, ſhe was ſoon diſguſted with the painful reſtraint impoſed on her by the latter; wild as wind, and unconfined as air, ſhe ſoon bid defiance to rule and order, determining to pleaſe herſelf juſt as ſhe uſed to do at Bramble-Hall. In conſequence of this *wiſe* reſolve, ſhe would mount her favourite blood-horſe, gallop him over Claverton Downs for a breathing before breakfaſt,

breakfaſt—leap off at the pump-room—*daſh* in—charge up the ranks between yellow-faced ſpinſters and gouty parſons, to the terror of the lame and decrepit—toſs down a glaſs of water—quite forget the *ſpur* with which ſhe always rode—entangle it in the fringe of ſome fair Penelope's petticoat, who in knotting it had beguiled many a love-lorn hour, which this fair equeſtrian demoliſhed in a moment, paying not the leaſt attention to the comments her behaviour occaſioned the company to make; ſuch as, "How vaſtly diſagreeable — monſtrous rude—quite brutiſh—only a fit companion for her father's hounds—I wonder how her mother, who is really a polite, well-bred woman, can think of letting her looſe on ſociety without a *muzzle!*" To audible whiſpers like theſe, Miſs Hawthorn either laughed contemptuouſly, or, as her wit was keen and pointed, ſhe made the retort courteous, and by her ſarcaſms ſoon ſilenced her antagoniſts.

At the balls ſhe paid as little attention to precedence and order, as ſhe did to ceremony in the pump-room; in vain King Tyſon talked about it, and about it; in vain he looked ſour, or ſerious; ſhe laughed in his face—adviſed him to deſcend from his altitudes, that only made him look queer and quizical; then walk to the top of the room, take her place upon thoſe ſeats held *ſacred* for Nobility, that were not to be contaminated by plebeians. In vain this *elected* ſovereign of etiquette talked of his delegated authority, and remonſtrated againſt her encroachments as indecorous and improper; the men ſupported her in all theſe freaks; the women afraid of her ſatirical powers, only murmured their diſapprobation.

The males were all charmed with the graceful beauty of her perſon, and the wild playful excentricities of her manners; ſhe was the toaſt and the admiration of Bath, under the appellation of *La belle ſauvage.*

ſauvage. The females concealed the envy they felt at this new rival of their charms, under a pretended diſguſt at her unfeminized manners, and maſculine purſuits; while ſhe felt and expreſſed a perfect contempt for their trifling avocations; and uſed to ſay they were pretty automatons, whoſe minds were as imbecile as their perſons.

Tired of the dull routine of faſhionable follies, as the pleaſure of ſurpriſing the crowd loſt the charm of novelty, Miſs Hawthorn ſighed for the time that was to reſtore her to her *early habits*. Of all the men that fluttered round, praiſed her charms, and vowed themſelves her devoted adorers, ſhe ſaw none that could ſtand in competition, or diſpute her heart with her favourite companion in the chaſe; the manly, bold, and adventurous Sir Harry Hurry.

Her father, who, by drinking the waters, had expelled the gout from his ſtomach to his feet, and was content to *accept* a pro-

longed exiſtence through the medium of excruciating torments, could not, till pronounced by the faculty, to be in a ſtate of convaleſcence, remove to Bramble Hall. Miſs Hawthorn, obliged to remain in a place of which ſhe was heartily tired, ſought amuſement in her own way; nor gave herſelf any trouble what the company, with whom, to oblige her mother, ſhe aſſociated, thought of her actions.

On her father's arrival at Bath, the Duke of Dreadnought was thereon a viſit for a ſimilar complaint; having often met at the pump, they had formed an acquaintance, and were become friends, from the commiſeration a congeniality of ſufferings, ever excite. The Duke was a great admirer of the fair form, and animated health of his daughter, as he well knew the value of the latter acquiſition, from the want of it in his own family.

His Grace therefore ſet his heart on marrying his ſecond ſon, Lord John Dareall, to the

the blooming Harriet Hawthorn, who was an ancient gentleman's family, and heireſs to a good fortune: had that not been the caſe, there were few conſiderations he would not have overlooked for a healthy heir to his title, of which he had no hopes from Marquis Fearleſs, his eldeſt ſon;—who had debilitated his conſtitution—brought on a premature old age by high living, and the attendant vices which young men of faſhion think they have an excluſive privilege of indulging, to the ruin of their health, principles, and fortune. He was now at Liſbon, ſent there by his phyſicians to breathe a few months longer in a world he was unwilling to quit, though without any hopes of recovery.

The Duke, thus fruſtrated of lineal deſcent from the Marquis, turned his thoughts on marrying Lord John directly to ſome young lady, whoſe health was not enervated by beating the round of London amuſements; or her mind vitiated by the licentious example of her *compeers*. Where then could he again

hope to meet with ſo proper a daughter-in-law as Miſs Hawthorn? He bleſſed the gout that had occaſioned his viſit to Bath; and determined to make immediate propoſals to her father, which he doubted not would be gladly accepted; he began already to look forward to a race of lovely grandchildren, growing up round his knees, their faces blooming with health, and minds uncontaminated with faſhionable vices.

He never allowed himſelf to form a *doubt* of the young couple's conſent and approbation to this match: he reaſoned as he felt, that it was impoſſible for an untaught country hoyden to refuſe his ſon, who, till the preſent moment, had ſeen nothing of the world beyond the paling of her father's park; who knew juſt as much about precedence as enabled her to walk out of the room before the curate's wife;—to ſuch a girl, the preſent honours and ſplendour that would await her, and the proſpect of being a *Dutcheſs*, muſt give ſuperlative happineſs.

Lord

Lord John, juſt turned of twenty, he knew would rejoice at the independence he meant to beſtow upon him, with a beautiful girl of eighteen for a wife, Having thus ſettled every thing to his *own* ſatisfaction, he wrote to his ſon, commanding him to leave Oxford, and repair immediately to Bath, as he wiſhed to ſee him on buſineſs of the utmoſt conſequence. This letter diſpatched, he ſent a note to Mr. Hawthorn, deſiring him to fix on the firſt hour that he ſhould be alone and diſengaged, as he had an affair of moment to communicate.

They met that evening, when Mr. Hawthorn *diſcovered*, by the pleaſure with which he received the Duke's propoſals of alliance, that his breaſt was not devoid of *ambition*; and it would be highly gratifying to that paſſion to be the father to a Dutcheſs, and a grandfather to little lords and ladies. For ſuch *good* and *weighty* reaſons, the offer was as eagerly accepted by Mr. Hawthorn, as it was made by his Grace; though he

had cogent reaſons for ſuppoſing that his daughter's affections were engaged to Sir Harry Hurry, whom he *once* thought a very good match for her; but the diſappointment his preſent plan muſt be to the young couple, did not give him a thought; nor could he believe it poſſible for Harriet to heſitate, when the change would probably make her a *dutcheſs*.

The fathers therefore began to ſettle the eſtabliſhment of the young people before they had been conſulted, or even ſeen each other; they were determined it ſhould be a match, and that was *enough*. Both were very liberal where money only was concerned. The Duke propoſed to allow his ſon four thouſand pounds a year; and, to enable him to make handſome ſettlements on his lady, he alſo agreed to reſign one of his ſeats for their country reſidence. In the *fullneſs* of his joy, Mr. Hawthorn ſaid he would give his daughter twenty thouſand pounds; and the remainder of his fortune, at his death, ſhould deſcend

deſcend to Harriet and her heirs. They now parted, mutually pleaſed with the *bargain* they had made to barter away the happineſs of their children: the Duke haſtened to acquaint his ſon, and the 'Squire to inform his daughter of the good fortune that awaited them.

But when Miſs Hawthorn was next morning informed, by her mother at breakfaſt, of the great honour intended by the Duke of Dreadnought, in ſelecting her for a daughter, in preference to all the young women of faſhion who aſpired to the hand of Lord John Dareall, and the ſplendour and happineſs that courted her acceptance,—never having been forced, or even requeſted, to act againſt her inclination;—from early infancy, owing to the miſtaken fondneſs of her father, ſhe had been the unreſtrained miſtreſs of her actions; the ſame freedom of will, and forcible energy of mind, that had actuated her conduct through life, now determined her to oppoſe ſtrenuouſly what ſhe

thought was an undue exertion of parental power; In conſequence of this reſolution, ſhe thus addreſſed her father:—

"Sir, I cannot marry this Lord whom you want to make my huſband, becauſe my heart and hand are already engaged to one that is worth half a dozen lords, honeſt Harry Hurry; to whom you never made any objection, till this gilded toy, a ducal coronet, faſcinated your eyes; but, for me, it has *no* charms; nor will I be ſold as one of your eſtates, and, like the old manor-houſe, thrown into the bargain. I hope the boaſted freedom of this iſland is not to be wholly engroſſed by the males, but that the females have a right to claim their juſt proportion: depend upon it, the charter of my ſex ſhall not be forfeited by *me*.

"Your fortune, ſir, is at your own diſpoſal; my perſon is at mine: and though againſt the laws of nature, you can give your property to this Duke's ſon, you cannot diſpoſe of your daughter without her *own* conſent. Re-

ſtrained and trammelled by laws and cuſtoms, women are already ſlaves to man; no privilege is left for them, but that of chooſing their priſon and jailor; and this ſmall indulgence I am not inclined to forego."

Her father did not at firſt interrupt her, ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the fruits of the education ſhe had received, and the liberty ſhe took with him in conſequence of it. He was now unable to ſpeak, choaked by contending paſſions, which allowed him not words to expreſs his reſentment, and he was ſhook with a paroxyſm of contending paſſions; while her mother exclaimed,

"Are you not aſhamed, Harriet, to hurt the feelings, and thwart the views, of ſo indulgent a parent, whoſe too great fondneſs, and improper indulgence, have taught you to treat him with ſo little duty and reſpect? The unreſtrained liberty of early youth, and the unwomanly purſuits in which you have been gratified, have, I fear, ſo unfeminized you, that the ſocial and the ſofter paſſions have

no place in your boſom. Your mind and manners are equally violent and boiſterous. Of that delicate bond, thoſe reciprocal pleaſures and benefits that unite children to their parents, you appear to know nothing: all this miſchief ariſes from your miſtaken father's affection and too great indulgence, which now, like other follies, has brought with it a ſevere puniſhment."

"You do me great injuſtice, dear madam; I feel as much filial affection as any whey-faced Miſs that never quitted the apron-ſtring of her mother, whoſe education has been in vain attempted on the *Utopian* ſyſtem, of your favourite Madame Genlis. I have as high an opinion of the duty I owe my parents for their care and tenderneſs, as earneſt a deſire to contribute to their happineſs, as any *ſentimental* daughter in the land, by complying with every thing but making myſelf miſerable for life, which I think no conſanguinity can authoriſe them to expect, or me to accede to. As to the want of feeling, of which you accuſe me, I truſt

that

that I ſhall not be found deficient in ſuſceptibility for the misfortunes of my fellow-creatures, and hope always to be poſſeſſed of ſenſibility ſufficient to induce me to relieve them. If indeed you judge the ſenſations of my heart, from thoſe *aſſumed* by the Miſſes that form a part of your viſitors, you muſt be deceived in your opinion of *me*. I cannot, like *them*, weep for the unnatural woes endured by the heroine of a modern novel; throw myſelf into convulſions at the ſight of a ſpider on my petticoat, a mouſe under my chair; or diſturb a whole audience, (who are not of ſufficient conſequence to have fits in public), by fainting becauſe an actreſs repreſents a mad ſcene with pathos, force, and energy. For ſuch conſiderations, I cannot conſent to annoy others, and make myſelf ridiculous in the hope of eſtabliſhing a character of delicate ſuſceptibility and refined feelings. I will not act an auxiliary part in aiding to ſupport the theoretic viſions of the *nervous ſyſtem*, which was firſt generated by policy, and now has acquired a

ſtability

ſtability by the weakneſs of women. If my motives and actions are judged from ſuch criterions, it is no wonder that I am, in your eſtimation, the degraded and brutal character you have deſcribed; for it is moſt true that I cannot condeſcend, by low and debaſing arts, to *maſk* the energies of my mind, and ſink myſelf, in my *own* opinion, below that point of perfection in the ſcale of human nature, to which I proudly aſpire."

Having pronounced this florid ſpeech, ſhe walked majeſtically out of the room; her father, looking after her, with a long drawn ſigh, ſaid, "It is too true, my dear, ſhe has had her head ſo long, that now ſhe will not be pulled in, and, at the firſt attempt to *curb* her, ſhe grows reſtive. But adviſe me what is to be done; for I have promiſed the Duke that his ſon ſhall marry her; every thing is *ſettled*, and Lord John is expected here immediately."

"I

"I think, Mr. Hawthorn, you have been too haſty in this buſineſs; for it is evident that, ſpoiled by your indulgence, violent meaſures will never do: leave her to me; I will try the effects of perſuaſion."

This being agreed to, Mrs. Hawthorn, having given orders to ſhut out all viſitors that evening, requeſted her daughter's company in her dreſſing-room; where ſhe commenced the attack, by pointing out to her (who, though ſhe ſpurned at every thing in the form of command, was not invulnerable to the blandiſhments of entreaty), that it was her intereſt to comply with the wiſhes of her father, by doing ſo, her deſire of independence would be gratified: the notoriety that ſhe ſo evidently courted, and the purſuits by which ſhe ſought to obtain it, that were arraigned and laughed at in the daughter of a private country gentleman, would be admired and imitated in the woman of rank and faſhion; ſhe urged Harriet to oblige her father, who had ſet his heart on ſeeing her Lady John Dareall; ſaid there was every

proſpect

proſpect of her being a ducheſs, his eldeſt brother, the Marquis Fearleſs, being now in a dying ſtate at Liſbon: ſhe called upon her, by the duty ſhe acknowledged ſhe felt for a parent, who had never refuſed her one requeſt from her earlieſt infancy, to let it be her guide in the preſent inſtance, and to allow his election of a huſband to be her choice.

Mrs. Hawthorn tried to rouſe the latent ſparks of pride that ſhe knew her daughter poſſeſſed, and entreated her not to throw from her ſo ſplendid an offer; at leaſt to conſent to ſee Lord John, and reconſider what ſhe had urged, before ſhe gave him his final negative. This her daughter was at laſt brought to promiſe: but what weighed more with her than *all* theſe dutiful or worldly arguments was, that ſhe found her father was determined not to give her a ſhilling if ſhe married Sir Harry. She was too high ſpirited to be a portionleſs wife to any man.

Mrs.

Mrs. Hawthorn went to the 'Squire to comfort him with the ſanguine hopes ſhe entertained of her ultimate ſucceſs; for Harriet had promiſed to reflect upon her arguments, and ſhe believed, with the poet, "the woman who deliberates is loſt." The event proved her conjectures were right.

The Duke introduced his ſon, who was much charmed with the beauty and animation of his intended bride; his youthful vanity was flattered by the idea of carrying away the toaſt of Bath from her numerous admirers: he therefore told his father how happy it would make him to receive from his hand the angelic Miſs Hawthorn.

In the mean time Harriet was beſet on all ſides; her father one moment ſwore ſhe *ſhould* have, the next deſcended to entreat that ſhe *would* have, Lord John. Her mother reiterated the former arguments: the old Duke made love for his ſon, and the latter aſſailed her with ſighs and ſonnets, though ſhe conſtantly aſſured him ſhe hated a whining lover,

lover, and that he injured his cauſe by his *madrigals*. They had her now ſo completely in their toils, that they took her conſent for granted: the lawyers were therefore ſet to work, and urged to be expeditious.

Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorn dreaded nothing ſo much as a meeting between their daughter and her favorite Baronet; but their manouvres were not carried on with ſo much ſecreſy, but the report of her intended marriage to the ſon of the Duke of Dreadnaught reached Sir Harry in the ſecluſion of Leveret Lodge; who immediately mounted his fleeteſt hunter, and was at Bath a conſiderable time before the poſt could have conveyed a letter. He went directly on his arrival to Mr. Hawthorn's houſe in the Creſcent, where he was not admitted: he then wrote to his dear Harriet, to remonſtrate on her *falſe-heartedneſs*, her cruelty in ſerving him ſuch a *jade's trick*; and concluded by vowing he would break every bone in the ſkin of the *little lord*, and ſend him to her packed up in a band-box. On the receipt of

of this elegant epiſtle, which he contrived to get delivered by a friend in the citadel, ſhe wrote him the following anſwer :—

" My dear friend Harry,

" It is but too true that I did promiſe to be yours ; and it is no leſs ſo, that I fear I ſhall be forced to break that promiſe : for I am ſo completely beſet, that it will be impoſſible for me to break *cover*, with any hopes of eſcaping the *pack* ; and, if I could *ſteal away*, it would not be in my power to bring you any thing, but a portionleſs wife ; for, if I marry you, my father has ſworn he will cut me off with a ſhilling. The good opinion I have of your generoſity, and of my conſequence to your happineſs, leave me without a doubt that you would gladly receive me even on ſuch hard terms ; but the the thoughts of becoming a dependant, and bringing only beggary into the family of the man I choſe for a huſband, is too degrading a ſituation for Harriot Hawthorn to embrace *voluntarily*. To prevent this, I have given my

my conſent to marry the man you call my *little lord*; he is a very harmleſs animal, who I verily believe, like myſelf, is *forced* into the ſervice by his father: and, as he could mean *you* no injury, not knowing of your predilection for *me*, I truſt you will let his *ſmall bones* remain whole; aſſuring yourſelf that, in all ſituations, I am, and ever ſhall be,

Your conſtant friend and well wiſher,

HARRIET HAWTHORN."

After Sir Harry had read this letter, and ſwore a ſcore of oaths at dame fortune for jilting him of ſuch a girl of mettle as his dear Harriet, whoſe fellow he ſhould not meet in three counties, whom he admired for her pride and ſpirit, though to gratify them, ſhe gave herſelf to his rival; he execrated the avarice and ambition of her father, and moſt devoutly committed the *little lord* to the devil,—having drank two bottles of port in half-pint bumpers to his confuſion, he once more mounted *fleet-heels*, and quitted Bath with more ſpeed than he entered it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

SOON after Sir Harry's departure, Lord John received the hand of the blooming Harriet from her father; the Duke's chaplain having come to Bath on purpoſe, with a ſpecial licence in his pocket to perform the ceremony; immediately after which the new married pair, with a ſplendid retinue, ſet off for Bramble Hall, the ſeat of Mr. Hawthorn's anceſtors, where he had taken their promiſe the wedding ſhould be celebrated; who, with the old faſhioned hoſpitality of his progenitors, ordered open houſe to be kept for his tenants and dependants. The October, brewed at the birth of his daughter, and

and preſerved for this joyful occaſion, was now poured out in liberal potations, and drank to the health of the bride and bridegroom: an ox was roaſted whole in the park, and the plumb-pudding of our hardy ſires ſmoked on the feſtive board. This rural *féte*, in the *old Engliſh* ſtyle, laſted a week.

Sir Harry quitted his ſeat as ſoon as he heard of the approach of the new-married pair, to make a viſit to a friend in a neighbouring county, at whoſe houſe he met the Honourable Miſs Mackintoſh, the daughter of a deceaſed Scotch Lord, a young lady more amply provided with dignity than dower; who could condeſcend to lay by the former to benefit the latter; ſhe therefore called forth all her charms to make a conqueſt of our willow-wearing knight, who had ſworn, on his *ſpurs*, that he would marry the firſt woman that ſaid *yes*.

On the firſt day of their meeting, he thought her a buxom girl, and enquired about her of his friend; wiſhed ſhe had been

Engliſh,

Engliſh, he did not like foreigners; for her being a Scotch-woman, rather ſtaggered his growing inclination: on the ſecond ſhe fixed him, by dancing a ſtrathſpey: he then offered himſelf to her for a partner in a reel, which, when it was finiſhed, ſhe having exerted herſelf with much vivacity, he bluntly told her, "that he was very lately croſſed in love, and had made a vow that he would never go what is called a courting again; that ſhe appeared a girl of ſpirit; and, if ſhe thought ſhe could paſs her life with an honeſt fox-hunter, he was at her ſervice; would ſettle upon her a good jointure, and marry her directly."

The lady, who knew her intereſt too well not to be pleaſed at the offer, thought ſhe muſt keep in the back ground; began to ſimper, and talk of his too much haſte; the neceſſity of their being better known to each other, before ſuch a momentous point was ſettled. On this Sir Harry roared out, "You muſt take your reſolution, Miſs Mac; for I have determined not to return

to

to Leveret Lodge till I carry a wife in my hand: no, no, I will not be played faſt and looſe again, till ſome ſniveling puppy of a *lord* comes and chouſes me out of my chance; ſo I give you till to-morrow to make up your mind; then my bonny laſſiie, off or on's the word."

Miſs Mackintoſh, having taken council of her friend, and pillow, prudently determined to accept Sir Harry; rightly ſuppoſing, in this money-loving age, a young woman, without parents or fortune, ought not to be too ſqueamiſh, but might think herſelf very happy to meet with a handſome young Baronet, and an unincumbered eſtate; ſhe thought, when in poſſeſſion of both, ſhe ſhould be enabled to manage the one and over-awe the other, by her ſuperior manners and illuſtrious pedigree. The matrimonial bargain being ſtruck, he returned with his *high blooded* bride to Leveret Lodge, on the very day Lord John and his lady quitted Bramble Hall, for the ſeat ſeceded to them by

by the Duke, whom Lady John was driving in a very high phaeton, with four bright bays, preſented to her by his Grace. On meeting the oppoſition party with their white favours, which at a glance ſpoke volumes to Lady John, the reins dropped from her agitated hands, and the colour forſook her cheeks; but ſhe recovered them, and her wonted preſence of mind, inſtantaneouſly; when, laſhing on her fiery courſers, ſhe in a moment was out of ſight of that which had given her heart a ſevere pang.

Let us now follow Lady John Dareall, and view her *entrée* into the great world, aided by all the advantages of youth, beauty, fortune, faſhion, and conſequence. She was the admiration of the men, the envy of the women, and the gaze of the multitude.—Through the entreaties and remonſtrances of the Duke, ſhe allowed herſelf to be preſented at Court, to have a box at the opera, and ſo far to comply with the faſhionable circles to which ſhe had been introduced, as to at-

tend their routs, and give them at her own houſe; but theſe were not the amuſements congenial to her mind, and ſhe determined, that, as ſhe yielded to her huſband's inclinations in town, ſhe would live to pleaſe herſelf in the country. For this purpoſe, ſhe kept a pack of fox hounds, that were reckoned the ſtaunchеſt in the county: her ſtud was in the higheſt condition; her pointers excellent; and the partridges felt ſhe had not forgot to take a good *aim*.

Obliged to paſs ſome of the winter months in London, ſhe ſoon threw off the reſtraint that tyrant cuſtom impoſes on the ſex;—amuſed herſelf by riding her favourite blood horſe, Tarquin, againſt the male equeſtrians in Hyde-Park; or driving her phaeton, with four fleet courſers in hand, through all the faſhionable ſtreets; turning a corner to an inch, to the wonder and terror of her beholders. The ladies, who were conſtantly hearing her admired by the men for her proweſs, and ventrous feats of horſemanſhip,

manſhip, finding Lady John Dareall was quite the *rage*, ſickened with envy, determining, as they could not perſuade her to deſcend to follow their faſhions, they would aſpire to imitate hers.

From hence we may date the æra of women venturing their pretty necks in a fox chaſe—ſhooting flying, and becoming female charioteers, to rival the celebrity of this fair huntreſs, who was at the head of the *haut ton*, with theſe *daſhing* ladies; and we had Dareall riding hats, Dareall boots and ſpurs, and Dareall ſaddles! But, while Lady John was gaining conſequence with the world, ſhe was loſing it in the opinion of her huſband, who, as the charms of novelty, by which he had been captivated, wore off, became very quick-ſighted to the faults of her education, and diſguſted at her puruits, which were in direct oppoſition to his own.

Lord John, delicate in his health and perſon, deteſted the maſculine avocations and boiſterous diverſions that formed the ſole happineſs of his lady: ſecluded in his ſtudy to avoid them, he ran into the contrary *extreme*: giving up his mind to effeminate and trifling ideas, he became a collector of ſhells, foſſils, and moſs; waſting his time in the purſuit of butterflies, and patroniſing reptiles, to acquire the titles of a virtuoſo, connoiſſeur, and a natural philoſopher. He frequently expreſſed his diſapprobation of her ladyſhip's manners and employments; while ſhe, whom we have ſeen, was not woman as *ſhe ſhould be*, and by whom the doctrines of paſſive obedience, and non-reſiſtance, were never practiſed, recriminated on his little lordſhip with all the virulence of paſſion and the irony of wit, treating with contemptuous inattention all his matrimonial lectures.

After having dragged on for ſome years in mutual diſſatisfaction, the galling chain

that had, by misjudging parents, joined two beings ſo oppoſite in their ideas of what conſtitutes the pleaſure of exiſtence, with minds lacerated by continual exertions for that power, neither would yield to the other; by the interpoſition of their mutual friends, they agreed to *part*. Mr. Hawthorn's death, which happened about this time, decided their doubts; it was ſaid to have been haſtened by regret for having enforced his dear Harriot to give up Sir Harry, whoſe mind and purſuits, congenial with her own, would have made her happy, while his ambitious choice had doomed her to miſery. Her father left Bramble-Hall to Lady John, and all the remainder of his fortune, for her life, to devolve at her deceaſe to his grandſon, the only child of this ill-concerted match, who was born the firſt year of his parents' marriage. Mr. Hawthorn, having long beheld with concern the ſeparate intereſt that guided his children, took care Lord John ſhould have no power over any part of his property, but the twenty

thouſand pounds he had given his daughter as a wedding portion. This apparent ſlight, and miſtruſt of his Lordſhip, in the diſpoſal of his fortune, for which he thought he had to thank the machinations of his lady, who, by being ſo perfectly independent, might now act as ſhe pleaſed, determined him on directly divorcing himſelf *a menſa et thoro*. To this Lady John moſt cheerfully conſented; ſhe retired to Bramble-Hall, the ſeat of her youthful pleaſures; where, in the purſuits that conſtituted them, ſhe now finds her higheſt gratification.

She is ſtill the favourite of the neighbouring gentlemen, is their companion in all their field ſports; ſhe ſometimes condeſcends to viſit their wives and daughters, and to receive them at Bramble-Hall; but ſhe never has formed what is denominated female friendſhip; ſhe avows ſhe looks on her own ſex as imbecile *triflers*, or artful *hypocrites*; with whom to aſſociate, you muſt either conſent to loſe your time, or your reputation. Such being her ſentiments,

ments, though ſhe was placed in what the world calls a delicate ſituation, ſhe could never be prevailed on to take into her houſe a female companion, always anſwering thoſe who adviſed her to it; that they were only live lumber, more plague than pleaſure; that ſhe did not want an old woman to take care of her by way of Duenna; nor to act herſelf in that character to a young one; that when ſhe choſe to give a dinner to the gentlemen of the hunt, ſhe made it a conſtant rule to invite her neighbour, Miſs Letitia Liptrap, and place her at her right-hand, who was a *hoſt* within herſelf; her cadaverous countenance, and fleſhleſs appearance, were ſuch a *memento mori* of the king of terrours, that ſhe was aſſured would appal the moſt determined libertine, and ſend his thoughts on an errand to the other world, inſtead of indulging licentious fancies in this.

Lady John's ſon was eight years of age when ſhe parted from his father, who in-

ſiſted that he ſhould remain with him. — This her Ladyſhip ſtrenuouſly oppoſed, and even condeſcended to entreat that he might be permitted to reſide with her till it was neceſſary he ſhould be ſent to Eton; on finding Lord John was determined not to comply with what ſhe thought a reaſonable requeſt, provoked at his refuſal, ſhe thus addreſſed him:

"My Lord, as I hope we meet for the laſt time, it is right you ſhould know how I meant to have acted by your ſon, and how I think that *you* will act by him. Had he been permitted to live with me, he ſhould have roſe with the lark, breakfaſted on cold beef, and waſhed it down with a cup of nut-brown ale, the food that gave your *boaſted* anceſtors ſtrength and vigour to graſp the ſhield, and wield the battle-axe. He ſhould have followed the chaſe by my ſide till the air had braced his nerves, and exerciſe given him appetite, to partake of the meal which, like his hardy forefathers, his arm had helped to procure. By this ſyſtem, his body would have grown athletic,

and

and his mind powerful; theſe are health-creating purſuits, by which the mental, as well as bodily, ſtrength is increaſed. Then would your iron-faced progenitors, whoſe deeds of hardihood and proweſs, you their *degenerate* deſcendant, are ſo proud of recounting, and ſo unable to imitate, rejoice in their mouldering monuments, and again "reviſit the glimpſes of the moon," to ſee at laſt a ſcion ſprung from the withered root of their Nobility, to reanimate their faded fame, and blighted laurels; one capable of perſonating a Hector in the battles of his country, and an Ulyſſes in its councils.

Such ſhould have been your ſon. What will he now be?—a poor, debilitated, enervated lordling, the counterpart of yourſelf, trembling at a breeze, weak, and ſpiritleſs,—a hunter of butterflies, a collector of grubs, a nurſe to inſects; who, while your child's birth was *doubtful*, and your wife's life in danger, was employed in watching

the change of a chryſalis into a moth; to gratify your favourite hobby, you gave five hundred guineas for a mummy, and at the ſame time refuſed to contribute ten, to relieve from a priſon, and reſtore to his family, a worthy old officer, that had waſted his beſt blood, in fighting the battles of your country, to enable you in ſafety to enjoy the ſuperlative delight of viewing the pangs of a cat in an air pump.

Thus, while you arraign manly purſuits, you deſcend to the moſt contemptible; have waſted your youth, health, and twenty thouſand pounds, to build a muſeum, and form a collection, for which no perſon will give your heir one thouſand. This your hangers-on and toad eaters are called upon to admire and wonder at; but even theſe reptiles make themſelves large amends for their ſufferance, by laughing, when your back is turned, at that, and its owner: beſides, your hobby lays you conſtantly open to the impoſition of every artful knave, to whom

whom you become an eaſy dupe. In recompenſe for this loſs of time and fortune, you are called a *natural* philoſopher, have been choſen a member of that uſeful and reſpectable body, that gives you the honour of adding F.R.S. to your title. I am informed that you live in hopes, when their preſent ſapient preſident becomes the property of worms, that you will be called upon to fill the vacant chair.

Can you flatter your vanity by ſuppoſing, that ſo inert, ſo loſt in abſtraction, you are fitted to form the mind and manners of your ſon, while to employments ſuch as theſe you dedicate your time and attention? Or do you expect, by ſtudying the commonwealth of an ant-hill, you will be enabled to make him a Hampden, a Sydney, or a Ruſſel? Of this be aſſured, if you educate my boy to be the manly, independent, decided character I know he may be made, and I find him worthy of my affection, he ſhall have it, and all the addition I can make to his fortune; if, on the contrary, influenced by your

example, he trifles away that time, which might be employed for the benefit of human nature, and to the honour of his country, in racking a butterfly on a wheel, I diſclaim him for my ſon, and will never ſee him more."

The Duke, who was preſent at this debate, conſcious that there was but too much reaſon in her ſpeech; that the folly of his ſon gave full ſcope for her wit; that, once determined ſhe would put her threats in force, and leave the fortune ſhe might ſave from his grandſon, now interfered, and requeſted Lord John to give up the boy for two years to the management of his mother; —but he was rouſed into a moſt deſperate rage at his lady's ironical attack on his favourite avocations, perhaps the more ſo, becauſe his conſcience whiſpered him that he deſerved it, vowed he would not permit her to have his ſon; for if he did, the boy would imbibe the manners of a groom, and never be fit for any thing but to drive

a ſtage coach, or act as whipper-in to a pack of fox hounds.

The Duke ſeeing but one alternative, propoſed that both parties ſhould reſign the boy to his care; promiſed he would place a proper perſon about him till he was ten years old, when he ſhould be ſent to Eton, and from thence to Oxford; that during his ſchool vacations he ſhould paſs his time alternately with both his parents. This arrangement being at laſt acceded to, Lord John and his lady parted with mutual pleaſure. The fruit of their altercation is grown up a fine young man, with all the fire and ſpirit of his mother, to which is added her perſonal beauty; he is now abroad on his travels; we ſhould have mentioned, that Marquis Fearleſs, contrary to all human expectation, recovered juſt enough to drag on a valetudinarian's miſerable exiſtence. He reſided in Italy a conſiderable time; but at the death of his father, which happened four years ago, he returned to take poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of his title and eſtates. He is very fond of his nephew, whom he has ſent for home, wiſhing to embrace him once more before he goes to that "undiſcovered country, from whence no traveller returns."

Lady John, at the preſent period, is not yet forty, though ſhe appears much older; for ſhe is grown robuſt, her complexion is dyed with the deepeſt bronze, occaſioned by living ſo much on horſeback, and expoſing herſelf to the warring elements in all ſeaſons; the burning ſun, or the pelting ſtorm, deter her not from her accuſtomed avocations. — By her management of herſelf, ſhe is ſo truly caſe-hardened, that ſhe ſets coughs, colds, and ſore-throats, at defiance.

She riſes at day-break, plunges directly into a cold bath, makes a meat breakfaſt, then mounts her fleet mare, and, according to the ſeaſon, either hunts, ſhoots, or courſes, till dinner. After having viſited her ſtud, ſits down at backgammon with the vicar; but

but if ſhe has a viſitor that can play, ſhe prefers her favourite game—cheſs.

Yet, though ſhe has done every thing to preſerve her health, and deſtroy her beauty, ſhe is ſtill a fine woman; her form is majeſtic and commanding; her eyes full of intelligent animation, that proclaims a mind within,—her teeth white and even. When firſt Lady John returned to Bramble-Hall, its affinity to Leveret Lodge making her meet its owner often in her rural purſuits, occaſioned a renewal of their former acquaintance: Sir Harry, like herſelf, had not experienced all the pleaſures that matrimony is ſaid to be capable of producing, when minds, in *uniſon*, *draw equal* in the yoke; he found himſelf as miſerable with a quality wife as ſhe had done with a quality huſband: mutual ſufferings induced mutual confidence, and that the comforts of commiſeration.—This of courſe occaſioned frequent interviews: theſe were ſoon noticed by lynx-eyed ſcandal, and reported with all the aids of exaggeration

aggeration to Lady Hurry, which brought on Sir Harry complaints, remonſtrances, and curtain lectures, *ad infinitum*: all theſe were likely to have little effect on the actions of two people, who publicly boaſted, that they meant to live the remainder of their lives to *pleaſe* themſelves; therefore their meetings were not the leſs frequent; nor did Lady Hurry's *mild* reproofs help to ſhorten their duration, ſo that ſhe was fain to endure what ſhe could not prevent.

His ſon, the preſent Baronet, was a few weeks younger than Mr. Dareall, who, as Lady John ſaw little of him, and young Harry was almoſt conſtantly with her at Bramble Hall, ſhe appeared to have tranſferred her affection from her own child to him, who, encouraged by her fondneſs, imbibing her inſtructions, and following the example of his father, we ſee him now at the pinnacle of faſhion; a Nimrod in the chaſe, a Jehu in London ſtreets, and a jockey riding his own matches at Newmarket; a bore at the

the opera, and a pigeon at the ladies faro-table. But he is a mixed character; for, with the athletic form, and rural purſuits of his father, he has inherited, with the high blood of his mother, a certain portion of pride and ambition: to gratify it, he ſeeks celebrity, by mixing with men of quality and faſhion; to gain the reputation of being one himſelf, he imitates all their follies, though they are not the *ſort*, from which by inclination or education *he* is enabled to receive any pleaſure. For this he ſeeks a wife among the daughters of needy nobility, with whom his money will compenſate for his manners; though, did he give the real ſenſations of his heart fair play, he would ſelect one of the buxom daughters of his foxhunting neighbours.

To gratify this deſire for fame, he will draw ſtraws for hundreds, race maggots for thouſands—has a fine chariot, built by Leader, in which he never rides; keeps an opera

opera dancer, whom he ſeldom ſees; but this is to give him *eclat* with the faſhionable world, and ſtamp him a man of high *ton*: for, to indulge his real taſte, he ſteals in a hackney-coach to the embraces of his dear Molly Mog, once the dairy-maid of his mother, but now his miſtreſs, in a ſnug lodging in Mary-bone, who he admires for the *vulgar*, but native charms, of roſy cheeks, white teeth, and arms as blue as a bilberry.

When young Harry was about fifteen, his father was thrown from his horſe, during a fox-chaſe, and fractured his ſkull, by attempting a deſperate leap, to follow his beloved Lady John, who had cleared it a few moments before; ſhe ſaw the accident, immediately ſprung from her horſe; and, while ſhe ſent for a ſurgeon and a carriage, no houſe being nigh the ſpot where the accident happened, ſhe threw herſelf on the ground by his ſide, and laying his bleeding head on her lap, ſhed a torrent of *genuine* tears over the *only* man ſhe

ſhe ever loved. He was unable to ſpeak, but ſeemed to be ſenſible of her tender ſorrow; for he feebly preſſed her hand, and, before any aſſiſtance arrived, as if it was fated ſhe ſhould receive his *laſt* ſigh, he expired in her arms.

She mourned for him with unfeigned ſorrow; her "occupation ſeemed to be gone;" her horſes fed quietly in their ſtalls; while, for the ſpace of three months, the hounds ſlept in their kennels, and ſhe wore a black riding-habit for ſix. Time, which ameliorates the keeneſt anguiſh, and reconciles us to all things, aided by the conviction, that we cannot recall the tenants of the tomb, failed not to pour its lenient balm into her wounded boſom, and Lady John was "herſelf again."

Sir Harry, by his father's will, was to reſide with Lady Hurry till he became of age, at which period he was to be maſter of himſelf and fortune: he divided his time, between what he called his two mothers, till

till that epocha, when Lady Hurry quitted Leveret Lodge, and went to reſide at Bath, in a houſe purchaſed for, and preſented to her by her ſon. Lady John never ſees or correſponds with her huſband, whoſe paſſion for collecting has increaſed ſince they ſeparated; he ſhuts himſelf up whole days in his muſeum, and is hardly viſible to any but the ſons of impoſition, who live by his credulity, and laugh at his folly; while he conſoles himſelf with the certitude, that his ſituation is not ſingular!

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

WHEN Lady Lavington thought the young people had danced ſufficiently, inexorable to their intreaties, to be allowed to prolong their amuſement, ſhe led the way to the ſupper-room, where they ſet down to an elegant cold collation, concluding the evening by ſinging catches and glees. The company now parted, highly pleaſed with the pleaſures the day had produced, which they expected would have been paſſed in formal ceremony and gloomy inanity, when they conſidered for what purpoſe they had been aſſembled. Mrs. Campley, and Miſs Letitia Liptrap, only felt ſorrowful and mortified;

fied; the former that what ſhe intended as a degradation to Ellinor had recoiled upon herſelf, and given a triumph, not a defeat, to her rival. To this ſhe had an additional grief, in the total demolition of her gold muſlin. Miſs Letitia experienced, with poignancy, the neglect of the men; and Sir Harry's rude treatment, though ſhe had been uſed to be his *butt* from his early years, in which he had felt encouraged by Lady John, yet the preſent inſult ſeemed *too* much for maiden endurance; to be publicly rejected, and obliged to ſit ſtill for want of a partner, when all the *Miſſes* of her acquaintance were dancing, was *terrible* indeed!

From this day all acrimony ſeemed to have ceaſed between the inhabitants of Morton-Abbey and Avon-place: to pleaſe, and to be pleaſed, were now the end and aim of the contending parties. The whole neighbourhood, in imitation of the Lavingtons, gave dinners, concerts, and balls, to the new married pair; at all of which, Ellinor's talents and

and beauty, enabled her to retain the admiration ſhe had excited on her day of triumph over Mrs. Campley. She buſied herſelf in attending to the decorations for the rural *fête*, that was to be given on Sir James's birth-day, which was intended to unite the ſimple and elegant: the ladies were to adopt a uniform that was fancied by Ellinor, who might be ſaid to be the miſtreſs of the revels. The dreſs invented by her conſiſted of a white muſlin jacket and coat, made a dancing length, trimmed with wreaths of artificial wild roſes; the hair, that was to be without powder, confined by fillets of the ſame, wound round the head: this, with the *bouquets* of myrtle, compoſed the whole of the dreſs, in which there were few of the young ladies that did not look more charming than they had formerly done, when ornamented with ſumptuous finery, the ſlaves of fantaſtic faſhion. While cheerful pleaſure beamed in their eyes, and gave added luſtre to their glances, health and youth mantled on their cheeks; as they thridded the mazes of the

the dance, their partners found their attractions irreſiſtible. Many a ſwain yielded his heart on that memorable night a willing ſacrifice to a ſylvan cupid, that had been impenetrable to the arrows ſhot in a courtly circle. If our fair countrywomen would allow us to adviſe them, they would truſt more to the charms of nature, and leſs to thoſe of art.

Lady Fanny Flutter, to the great joy of her friend Auguſta, had arrived at Avon-Place, a few days prior to that on which the gala was to be celebrated. Leveret Lodge had likewiſe its viſitors; a batch of what Sir Harry Hurry, its owner, denominated good fellows. The party conſiſted of the Duke of Southernwood, a debauchee of famed notoriety ſome fifty years paſſed, who had long ſince determined he would he live all the of his life, that his vices and his exiſtence ſhould terminate together. Lord Charles Hairbrain, poſſeſſed of a good heart, and a weak head, incapable of guiding himſel, and

aſpiring

aſpiring to the title of a *bon vivant*, is the conſtant dupe of the wicked and the witty; plunges into follies from which he derives no pleaſures, and crimes at which the tenderneſs of his nature recoils with horror. Captain Littlefear, of his Majeſty's guards, who had ſeen ſome ſervice, in attending his Royal Maſter to and from the Theatres—in marches and countermarches, from Whitehall to St. James's—even his amours had been often a ſervice of danger; for one day, laying ſiege to a pretty nurſery maid, that had taken her young charges for the benefit of *air*, into the denſe and foggy atmoſphere of St. James's-Park, he got a ſound drubbing from her ſweetheart, for only condeſcending to take a few trifling liberties with his miſtreſs. He had ſince reſtored his character for valour by a *modern* duel. Having quarelled with a brother officer, equally courageous, at the play-houſe, for a faſhionable courtezan, who, after they had diſturbed the pleaſures of the audience for an entire hour, exchanged cards; they met the next morning

on Blackheath, where he boldly received his adverſary's fire at *ſixteen paces* diſtance, and in due order diſcharged his piſtol in the air: the ſeconds interfered,—the principals ſhook hands,—and their courage was in future indiſputable.

The laſt, though not leaſt in his own opinion, was a ſon of the church, Mr. David Danglecourt, whoſe early proſpects in life had not flattered him with hopes of his preſent exaltation; he was the younger child of a tradeſmen, whoſe induſtry was ex-exerted to maintain a large family.

David was early initiated in his father's trade: heavy and ignorant, he might have toiled on, unknowing and unknown, had not his elder brother, by one of thoſe capricious freaks of the blind goddeſs, in which ſhe ſometimes indulges, won the heart of a rich widow; who, mortified at the family of her huſband, being *Bourgeoiſe*, offered to beſtow upon his brother a ſmall living ſhe had in her gift, if he would quit the employment of his

his anceſtors, and take orders. This was readily accepted by David, who began to feel a reflected conſequence from his brother's elevation. He was ſent to one of the univerſities, where, after reſiding the neceſſary time to take his firſt degree, he was inducted into the living. Of his capabilities for filling the ſacred function he was thus unexpectedly called to, the lady donor never thought; and David himſelf felt no compunction, like the great Johnſon, to ſheer the flock he did not feed. Fearleſsly he entered upon his miſſion; and thoſe whom his affected grimaces and falſe ſtops did not diſguſt, his monotonous tones ſet aſleep.

He is a clerical beau, aſpiring to the ſociety of nobility from his conſanguinity to a family of faſhion. For this aſſumption he meets frequent mortifications: when he bows familiarly to his Grace of ——, or grins at an Earl, they turn upon their heel, with a look of frigid wonder. His conſtant failures neither cure nor depreſs him; if, in his unwearied attempts to gain notice, he is enabled to hand a Ducheſs to her chair, or call up the carriage

of a Counteſs, as it will ſometimes happen at an opera, concert, or play, that no titled enamorato is at hand, they condeſcend to employ Mr. Danglecourt to ſee after their ſervants; this is a ſufficient recompenſe for his former rebuffs, and Mr. Danglecourt is in raptures for that night; and the next morning makes viſits to all the *little* miſters and miſtreſſes of his acquaintance, who will *let him in*, to ſay, "what an enchanting evening he paſſed with the Ducheſs of Matchem and her bewitching daughters, as he made one of the party in her Grace's box at the opera! that ſhe was quite a *bon companion!*" repeat her witty ſayings, and his ſmart retorts, at her *petit ſoupe*, though he never ſaw the inſide of her houſe in his life.

He has long ſince *cut* all his plebeian friends; whom, even with the help of the glaſs that dangles from his neck, he cannot recollect when they accoſt him in public. He can exiſt in no other air but that breathed by people of faſhion. To gain a ſmile from them, he will cringe with the

moſt fawning ſervility. He is ever a *led* parſon, in the moſt ſtrict ſenſe of the word, to ſome debilitated nobleman, who has church preferment in his gift. He is at preſent courting the patronage of the Duke of Southernwood, who brought him to Leveret Lodge, and introduced him to its owner, with "Damme, Harry, I have taken the liberty to ſaddle you with a viſitor; but I know you will excuſe it; for curſe me if I could ſhake off the *black leech*, he ſtuck ſo cloſe to my ſkirts: but he will be no check to our pleaſures; the animal is perfectly harmleſs, will fetch and carry with the docility of one of King Charles's long-eared ſpaniels."

As ſoon as their arrival was known, cards were ſent to invite this reſpectable group to partake of the feſtivity of Avon Place. The great, the important epocha at length arrived; the morning was uſhered in with ringing of bells; and the ſervants, having heard their maſter was born at 12 o'clock on that day

forty-two years ſince, ſcoured up ſome ſmall cannon, that had been thrown aſide as uſeleſs ſince the days of ancient warfare, and placed them at diſtances round the park, unknown to its owner;—they fired a *feu-de-joye* as the clock ſtruck the hour of his birth; this was accompanied with three cheers, while the air reſounded with "Long live the worthy Sir James Lavington!" When the ſurpriſe of that gentleman and the ladies, at this unexpected report, had ſubſided, he went into the park to thank his well-meaning ſervants and tenants for their compliment; for the conſciouſneſs of well-earned praiſe muſt *ever* be a pleaſurable ſenſation;—as ſuch Sir James's heart felt and acknowledged it.

The day was remarkably fine; tables were ſpread under ſome large oaks, where all the farmers, with their wives and children, the villagers, and ſervants, were ſerved with a good and ſubſtantial repaſt. The joke, the tale, and the glaſs went merrily round: Sir James and

and his party walked to the tables, and drank a glaſs of wine to thank them for their good wiſhes. The green was appropriated for their rural ball; and, that their mirth might not be reſtrained by the intruſion of *ſtars* and *coronets*, the long-neglected ball-room had been prepared for the more elegant, but leſs happy, part of the company; it was newly painted and ſtuccoed; it had been the employment of Auguſta and Ellinor for ſome weeks to ornament it for their reception: it was originally built for dancing; was forty feet long, and very lofty; it had a row of French windows on each ſide that opened down to the lawn; on the right was a view of the river Avon, rolling its ſilver current through enamelled meadows and waving corn fields; on the left, the wood of oaks, terminated by the Druid's temple; in the back ground roſe the majeſtic trees of the new foreſt.

In the receſſes between the windows, which were intended for ſtatues, but whoſe pedeſtals now ſupported ſuperb

China vaſes, filled with the moſt odoriferous flowers, various coloured lamps were hung round, and joined over the windows in fanciful devices, which had an elegant and brilliant effect; and, aſſiſted by three ſuperb luſtres that depended from the cieling, gave a blaze of light: the other ornaments were feſtoons of real laurels, mixed with artificial wreaths of full-blown roſes and lilies. The whole appeared in perfect uniſon with the dreſs worn by the ladies: nothing could equal the ſurpriſe and pleaſure of the company as they were ſtruck by the *coup d'œuil*; they ſaid it appeared a temple raiſed by magic to entertain the ſylvan deities.

The ball was opened by the Duke of Southernwood and Miſs Lavington, whoſe minuet formed an inimitable contraſt between the ancient and modern ſtyle of dancing; the ſecond was by Mrs. Campley and Sir James Lavington. Immediately after country dances began, and were kept up with great ſpirit till twelve o'clock, when they

they retired to an elegant ſupper, ſerved in gilt plate; as did the party on the lawn to a plentiful one, who had enjoyed the mirth and glee of the evening with a *goût* that might have excited envy in the breaſts of the ſplendid part of the company, who, in a conſtant *routine* of pleaſure, ever ſigh for ſomething new and unenjoyed.

After ſupper they returned to dancing, and did not ſeparate till the ſun lighted them to their carriages. Ellinor, though there were ſome fine and many pretty women preſent, bore away the palm of beauty. The Duke of Southernwood ſwore by every thing celeſtial and terreſtrial, there was none to compare with her in the *preſent* world of faſhion; for ſhe had the grace of a Pembroke, the beauty of a Coventry, and the wit of a Bridget Lane united: he concluded by declaring, he would give half his fortune to obtain her. Captain Littlefear vowed he would fight any man that did not allow her to be the moſt perfect performance of nature's

works; while Parſon Danglecourt proteſted on his honour, ſhe wanted only a *title* and *fortune* to make her delectable. Colonel Campley confined his admiration and future intentions, with reſpect to Ellinor, to his own boſom, treating her in company only with general politeneſs: as to his wife, his feeling for her, which at firſt were indifferent, were now changed to contempt for her vulgarity and ignorance, and diſguſt at the malevolence ſhe had exhibited towards Ellinor; for whom he felt as much love as he could for any being but *himſelf*; and of that ſelf he had too good an opinion to ſuppoſe, if he could once get Ellinor in his power, but that ſhe muſt yield to his perſuaſions, aided by his perſon and purſe: he therefore reſolved, by a ſtrict attention to decorum, to gain the friendſhip of the Lavingtons; and, by a thouſand nameleſs attentions, to ſecure himſelf an intereſt in the heart of Ellinor, truſting to the Chapter of Accidents for a fortunate moment for his *coup de main*,

While

While he was amuſing himſelf in his dreſſing-room, planning theſe honourable ſchemes for the deſtruction of Ellinor, merely to gain *eclat* in the world of gallantry, and gratify the inclination of the moment, the party in the breakfaſt parlour were in cloſe conſultation; Mrs. Oſwald having declared, that ſhe meant to give a *fête* to the neighbourhood in compliment to her nephew and niece; but ſhe ſhould like to have ſomething quite elegant, and different from the Lavingtons, who thought nobody could do any thing clever but themſelves. But what was it to be, was the queſtion? for they had given balls *al freſco*, balls in a beautifully-decorated room, concerts in temples, and ſuppers in ſplendid ſaloons.

In this dearth of invention, Mrs. Campley thought of the Colonel, and flew to fetch him to aid their councils; whoſe opinion was aſked by the whole party at the ſame moment, without acquainting him on what

he was to decide: bowing to Mrs. Oſwald, he requeſted to be informed why he was ſummoned to this female conclave? for, when acquainted with the nature of their dictates, ſhe might command his beſt *advice*. Informed by her that ſhe meant to give an entertainment to the neighbourhood in honour of him and his wife, he heard her with a pleaſure that flaſhed from his eyes, and lighted up his countenance with ſmiles of approbation; and immediately recommended to her the giving a rural maſquerade, as perfectly novel in that part of the country; for it would afford ſuch a ſcope for *her* taſte and fancy, and would throw every thing that had been done at Avon Place into the back ground.

This aſſurance was ſufficient to have his plan received with exultation by Mrs. Oſwald, and exuberant exclamations of joy from the reſt of the company. Cards were directly wrote, and diſpatched, inviting

viting all the neighbourhood for twenty miles round to a *bal maſqué*, at Morton Abbey, that day fortnight.

We muſt now leave them to decorate the antique towers of their anceſtors, invent characters, and plan dreſſes, whilſt we return to Avon Place.

CHAP. X.

WHEN the card of invitation arrived from Morton Abbey, the family were aſſembled in Lady Lavington's dreſſing-room, who was purſuing her everlaſting avocation of knotting, Ellinor embroidering a waiſtcoat for Sir James, Auguſta practiſing a ſonata of Haydn's; while Lady Fanny Flutter was lolling on a *ducheſſe*, playing with an Italian greyhound, ennuied to death to know how to diſpoſe of that *time*, of ſuch ineſtimable value to thoſe who employ it properly, which ever drags "its ſlow length along," as the liſtleſs and the lazy count its receding moments, thanking the ſtars they

are paſſed. Its real conſequence is known and valued by the lively, ſpirited, and energetic mind; eager to enjoy the fleeting treaſure, they loſe not a moment, but portion them out to acquire knowledge, that, by the improvement of their mental faculties, they may enjoy the bodily with a higher zeſt. To thoſe that uſe *time* as a friend, not fly him as a foe, he brings pleaſures that pleaſe on reflection; his votaries truly live all the days allotted them: but thoſe who murder *time*, by trifling follies and vicious purſuits, of thoſe he takes a great revenge; they wear out their exiſtence, deſpiſed by the ſenſible, laughed at by the witty, and pitied by the active; they drag on a life of laſſitude, and die miſerable, having lived a burthen to themſelves, and uſeleſs to ſociety.

When Lady Lavington read Mrs. Oſwald's card, announcing a maſquerade, Lady Fanny ſprung on her feet, crying, "Pray, dear Lady Lavington, did I hear you right? did you not

not ſay ſomething about a maſquerade? Oh, repeat the enchanting ſounds, or I ſhall be loſt in the ſtupor that ever pervades my ſenſes amidſt purling ſtreams, leafy groves, and twittering larks."

"I am very ſorry, Lady Fanny, to find the efforts of this family have failed to amuſe you; though I am conſoled to think they have been exerted to the utmoſt for that purpoſe.

"My charming Lady Lavington, do not be angry with me; you are very kind, and very good, and Avon Place is moſt delectable: but it is the country,—I always hated the country. I ſhould never have done for an Arcadian ſhepherdeſs, to have ſat by a murmuring rivulet, making chaplets of flowers to crown my conſtant ſwain, whilſt I warbled wood-notes wild, and he, like Pan, accompanied me with his oaten pipe,—our flocks at feed, our lambs at play. No, I have no taſte for country paſtimes; I leave them and the ſighing ſwains, to the elegant Ellinor, who, that old Druid of Totterdown

terdown-hill, Southernwood, calls the queen of the rural revels." This ſpeech was accompanied by a ſarcaſtic toſs of the head.—"Give me a little more of art, and leſs of nature; for I honeſtly acknowledge, though I know it is high treaſon againſt the ſylvan deities, who have conſecrated this choſen ſpot to receive the adoration of mortals, and have made Ellinor high prieſteſs of their rights and ceremonies, that I do prefer a ball-room, lighted with wax candles, to a dance *al freſco* by the ſoft light of the moon; that I am more charmed with myſelf, when the ſparkling of my diamonds add luſtre to my eyes, than dreſſed as I was laſt night, in what Sir James calls "*ſimplex munditiis*," which I tranſlate, is being a great *bore*,—no flowing robes, no powder, no rouge."

"My dear Lady Fanny," replied Auguſta, "I thought I never ſaw you look more charming than in this very dreſs you now depreciate; and were not all the men of the ſame opinion? was not the uniform beautiful, and the effect altogether faſcinating?

nating? Did you not ſend away half the beaux heartleſs? What could you have done more, if glittering in the moſt ſplendid habit?"

Lady Fanny ſmiled moſt graciouſly on Auguſta for this well-directed flattery; it helped to put her in good humour with herſelf, which ſhe had never been ſince ſhe arrived at Avon-Place, had ſeen the attention with which Ellinor was treated by the women, and the adulation of the men; and that ſhe was doomed to act but a ſecondary part in deſpite of her title and conſequence. The laſt evening had given her the mortification of ſeeing that her ruſtic Baronet, Sir Harry Hurry, to fix whom in her chains, ſhe made this viſit to Avon-Place, was a truant Knight, ready to throw off his allegiance, and wear the colours of the hated Ellinor; againſt whom, if ſhe thus continued to make all hearts her own, Lady Fanny determined to cabal with the diſaffected, and to

perſuade

perſuade them to riſe *en maſſe*, and drive the foe from the country.

To effect this, ſhe was a conſtant ſpy on every look and action of Ellinor's; but it did not avail; the former were ſo innocent, and the latter ſo correct, that ſhe could find nothing to condemn. She was more fortunate in her obſervations on her admirers; artful herſelf, ſhe ſoon had the ſagacity to diſcover the artifices of others; ſhe felt a ſevere *pang* on perceiving that Campley was her lover; but whether a favoured one or not ſhe was ignorant: ſhe likewiſe recollected the ſcandal that had been propagated among the faſhionable circles, of the ſententious moraliſt, Sir James Lavington's heart not being invulnerable to this all-conquering Ellinor. On much leſs foundation ſhe thought a fabric might be raiſed, to cruſh in its fall this aſſuming rival into annihilation.

On thoughts of this "dire portent" was Lady Fanny employed, while lolling on the *ducheſſe*,

ducheſſe, when arouſed to life and action by the joyful news of a maſquerade—an amuſement of all others calculated to aid the treacherous heart, and betray the innocent. Of this ſhe was convinced, and rejoiced at ſuch an opportunity for miſchief, as now preſented itſelf to her fertile imagination. She talked in raptures of the diverſion ſhe ſhould have in *quizzing* the queer inhabitants of Torpor-Caſtle, the name ſhe gave Morton-Abbey on her firſt viſit; aſked what characters they ſhould aſſume; and amuſed herſelf till the entrance of Sir James, by ſuppoſing thoſe that would be fixed on, and the manner in which they would be ſuſtained.

Sir James inquired what had occaſioned her Ladyſhip's unuſual flow of ſpirits; and being informed by Lady Lavington, he expreſſed much ſurpriſe at Mrs. Oſwald's folly, in attempting to introduce ſuch improper diverſion into the country; a *baleful* exotic, that did not thrive even in the hot-bed of the

the capital, when patronized and protected by taſte and faſhion. How then could it be expected to give pleaſure, or rear its ſickly head, in the uncongenial regions of Morton-Abbey, aided only by the imbecile attempts of its ignorant owner? He concluded his remarks by ſaying, that his family ſhould not give a ſanction to the folly by partaking of it.

On this aſſeveration, a ſudden gloom pervaded every face. Lady Fanny exclaimed, "Sure, Sir James, you do but jeſt; you cannot ſeriouſly intend not to go! How can you ſay it will not be a good thing? Why, it will be delightful! Pray what do the pleaſures of a maſquerade conſiſt in, but ridiculous characters? If they are ill-ſuſtained, ſo much the better; the mirth will ariſe from the attempt, inſtead of the deed. As to the miſchief that is ſaid to ſpring from this diverſion, in mixed companies, cannot happen *here*, where every body will be known, as all muſt unmaſk

at

at ſupper; beſides, you can go with us in the character of Merlin, and incloſe us in a circle that the wicked ſpirits *dare* not enter. You ſhall lay down what laws you pleaſe for your ſubjects; but go we *muſt*, my dear Sir James, and you *muſt* take care of us.

I can have no right to prevent your ladyſhip's accepting the invitation; and, as my gueſt, I ſhall think it incumbent on me to attend you, whatever my private opinion may be, that neither danger nor inſult may be the conſequence. You muſt excuſe me if I decline allowing the females of my family being of the party, to partake in a diverſion of which I diſapprove. I will tomorrow morning call on Mrs. Oſwald, and give my reaſons for declining her invitation. Lady Fanny renewed her entreaties, in which ſhe was joined by Lady Lavington and Auguſta. Ellinor had not uttered a word during this debate, and retired before Sir James and Lady Lavington quitted the room.

No

No ſooner was Lady Fanny left alone with Auguſta, than ſhe began her plan of attacking the abſent Ellinor, by ſaying, ſhe hated ſententious Miſſes, who ſet up themſelves in oppoſition to their ſuperiors, pretending to yield, that they might conquer—who were rewarded by private adulation, for what they, in public, modeſtly pretended to avoid, whoſe hypocriſy was ſo artfully woven, that it effectually blinded thoſe moſt concerned in developing their plots; but ſhe could *ſee* and deſpiſe ſuch deception."

"I really do not underſtand you, Lady Fanny," ſaid Auguſta; "what artifices do you mean? and to whom do you allude? that is juſt acting a part?"

"To whom ſhould I, but to this far-famed Ellinor, who will infuſe *poiſons*, as deſtructive into your family as her royal nameſake extracted from the wound of her illuſtrious Edward. Did you obſerve, that ſhe did not join us in intreating Sir James that we might go to Torpor Caſtle, becauſe ſhe would not forfeit his good opinion for prudence, ſelf-forbiddance,

and

and a philoſophic command of her paſſions. That ſhe can do all this when her intereſt is concerned, I muſt allow, to repel others, and to bring herſelf forward as the firſt character. By means like theſe, my charming young friend, are you, by the artful manœuverings of this ſyren, robbed of that place in ſociety to which, by merit, beauty, and talents, you are ſo juſtly intitled: nor will the danger ſtop here; for it is only yourſelf and Lady Lavington that are blind to the power ſhe has gained over Sir James by her faſcinations."

"I am all aſtoniſhment at what I hear! I think you muſt be miſtaken in your judgment of Ellinor's conduct. Of the motives of my father's actions I am certain you are. She has ever behaved with that open candour, that attention to prevent our wiſhes, ſince ſhe has made one of our family, that it is impoſſible not to love and eſteem her many virtues. You, lady Fanny, muſt have been impoſed on by ſome enemy of Ellinor's,

created

created by the good qualities of her head and heart: the complaint you bring againſt her, that ſhe did not urge Sir James to conſent to our going to the maſquerade, was (for well I know her ſentiments) becauſe ſhe thought, in her dependent ſituation, it would be a preſumption to expect he would comply with a requeſt from her, that he had refuſed to the united entreaties of you and Lady Lavington."

"I am ſorry, my Auguſta, for your own ſake, that you are blinded by the ſpecious arts of this girl to her real character: to me it ſtands confeſſed, as it will to you, ere long. Then you will vainly wiſh you had attended to the warnings of your friend. Once more let me deſire, you will allow me to pluck the fillet from your eyes, and induce you to look back on the conduct of this Ellinor, from her *firſt* appearance in your family."

Auguſta nodded aſſent, and Lady Fanny proceeded:—

"Has ſhe not, by her management, made a total change in all your arrangements? You muſt excuſe me, if I ſay ſome things diſagreeable; for, like a good ſurgeon, I muſt apply a *cauſtic* to perform a cure. Did not this Ellinor, on entering your houſe, find Lady Lavington contracted in her expences? penurious in her pleaſures? Has ſhe not induced her to be liberal in both, even to profuſion?

Sir James was a recluſe, a ſurly miſanthrope, ſhut up in his ſtudy, converſing only with the philoſophers, the poets, and heroes of Greece and Rome,—*almoſt* inacceſſible to his own family—*abſolutely* ſo to his friends. For years he had been a *living* monument of the houſe of Lavington, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." If her ladyſhip gave a party once in the winter, ſo far from emerging from his muſty retreat, he flew to it, and, as a barrier to the human face divine, doubly locked his door, and filled his ears with cotton. This was the ſtate of your family, when Ellinor firſt came to it."

"To

"To prove my aſſeverations juſt, and her amazing power, let us only take a retroſpect of what it has produced. The acidity of your mother's countenance was ſmoothed into ſmiles; her ſtiff, ſtupid, and ſober whiſt parties took the form of *converzationés*; which, by degrees, began to be frequented by men of wit, and women of *ton*, where we met with people worth opening our eyes to greet.

By a quick gradation, theſe became concerts; which terminated in balls and ſuppers; and, wonderful to ſay, Lady Lavington's *fêtes*, were, for ſplendour and elegance, the admiration and envy of the faſhionable world; and, to ſurpriſe us ſtill more, Sir James deigned to make one of theſe parties, to relax the rigidity of his ſombre countenance, to ſtalk leſs in the ſtep of Hamlet's ghoſt; and to talk with mere men and women. In ſhort, to deſcend from his altitudes, to permit himſelf once more to be amuſed by this world and its pleaſures;—he was now ſeen at the opera, the public concerts, and the play-houſes.—

This man, long loſt in the abſorption of deep philoſophy, has been obſerved trotting in the circle of Ranelagh, and even laughing at the Fantoccini! What has effected this ſurpriſing revolution in his mind and manners? Woman—dear delicious woman! That ſame paſſion that ſet Hercules ſpinning, laid proud Troy in aſhes, and loſt Anthony a world, has enabled your father to find charms in that ſociety from which he has been ſo long ſecluded. In ſhort, he is in *love* with this goddeſs of his own creation. The town ſaw, and talked loudly; but, as thoſe moſt concerned in a ſtory are ever the laſt made acquainted with it, I ſuppoſe Lady Lavington and yourſelf have never heard what was whiſpered laſt winter, through your round of viſitors."

"I ſhould not have undertaken the unthankful taſk of opening your eyes, had not the ardent friendſhip I *feel* for you induced me, if poſſible, to prevent your being any longer the dupe of Ellinor's ſpecious arts—who moves the wires, while you, like an automaton, act as ſhe directs. I leave you to

make

make your own reflections on what I have ſaid; but muſt inſiſt that you do not mention a word of this converſation to Lady Lavington. As to the girl, only keep a ſtrict watch upon all her actions, till you are aſſured that I have aſſerted incontrovertible facts."

Auguſta, ſtagnated at what ſhe had heard, promiſed the deſired ſecreſy, and they retired to their reſpective toilets—Lady Fanny well pleaſed with the poiſon ſhe had infuſed into the mind of her friend—convinced that it would work ſlow and ſure; as her mind, impreſſed with doubts and diſtruſt, would now conſtrue the moſt innocent actions of Ellinor and Sir James into crimes, and bring them forward, as a corroboration of what ſhe had aſſerted.

Auguſta, ſeduced by the artful Lady Fanny to look on the motives of Ellinor's behaviour in a different point of view from what they had hitherto appeared to be, was ſtaggered in her opinion; that ſhe had great power over the mind of her father was moſt

certain; that he had emerged from moping melancholy almoſt directly after her arrival in Groſvenor-ſtreet, could not be diſputed; but that Ellinor had always appeared to uſe the influence ſhe had acquired, to promote the pleaſures and gratifications of every one concerned more than her own, truth obliged her to allow. But now her eyes were jaundiced by this faſhionable fiend, ſhe beheld, in the worſt point of view, all the friendly and fatherly regards of Sir James, to this child of his bounty.

The tender effuſions her energetic mind and grateful diſpoſition propelled her to expreſs, of the protector of her perſon and character, now recurred to her recollection, and *all* made againſt the perſecuted Ellinor; to whom the conduct of Sir James appeared ſo much above mortality, that ſhe almoſt worſhipped him as a divinity. Her boſom knowing no guile, ſhe had often expreſſed to Auguſta the ſentiments ſhe felt for her father, with the vivid and glowing ſenſations of a ſuſceptible and unadulterated child of nature.

CHAP. XI.

WHILE thoſe plots were machinating againſt the peace of Ellinor, ſhe was revolving in her mind how ſhe ſhould oblige her friend Auguſta, by inducing Sir James to accede to her requeſt to become a partaker of the intended amuſements at Morton Abbey; little dreaming of the blow that at that very moment was aiming at her happineſs and reputation by Lady Fanny, whoſe character ſhe had long ſeen through, and whoſe envy and malice ſhe deſpiſed. Like thoſe poſſeſſed of high minds and good hearts, ſhe was not ſufficiently on her guard;

contemning the artifices ſhe ought to have feared, ſheltered by the ſhield of innocence, ſhe defied the power of her enemies: but, alas! it could not ſave her from the double-edged ſword of ſlander, or the ſhafts of calumny. Though innate rectitude would not prevent the wounds they inflicted, the conſciouſneſs of not deſerving reproach would ſupport her through the pain they occaſioned.

The evening proving fine, Lady Fanny and Auguſta propoſed taking a ride in the foreſt, and aſked Ellinor to accompany them; ſhe excuſed herſelf by ſaying that Lady Lavington had deſired her to viſit her invalid patients in the neighbouring village, as her ladyſhip did not find herſelf quite well. Her refuſal pleaſed Lady Fanny, who wiſhed to follow up the blow ſhe had ſtruck in the morning, and induce Auguſta to become a ſpy upon her friend's actions; which, if ſhe could once effect, ſhe was convinced would ultimately enable her to carry her favourite point; as the beſt intentions of the heart,

when

when viewed by a prejudiced eye, may be made appear the worſt.

From a concatenation of events, before they returned at night, Auguſta became a convert to the doctrines inculcated by Lady Fanny; and ſaw Ellinor in no other light than that of a ſpecious hypocrite, aſſuming virtues ſhe did not poſſeſs to impoſe on her mother and herſelf; to ſeduce the affections of her father from both, and build her own fortune on his blind folly, and their ruin. She promiſed therefore to be guided in future by the counſels of her dear Lady Fanny, to watch for a favourable opportunity to unmaſk the deceiver, and to drive from the houſe, as ſhe had already done from her heart, ſo dangerous an inmate.

Sir James, on ſeeing Ellinor preparing for her walk to the village, offered to accompany her; ſhe cheerfully accepted his propoſal, hoping, in the courſe of the *promenade*, that he would lead to the ſubject on which ſhe

wiſhed to ſpeak—this momentous maſque-rade; nor was ſhe diſappointed, for he began it himſelf, by ſaying, "I give you much credit, Ellinor, for not adding the weight of your ſolicitations to thoſe of the other ladies this morning, to induce me to be a partaker of the Morton Abbey revels; though, at your time of life, and with your vivacity, I can have no doubt but it met your wiſhes, and that you would have had no objection to have made one in the motley group. Come, be candid in your anſwer, and ſay, though with your uſual prudence you impoſed ſilence on yourſelf, that your heart was equally in the buſineſs with my more clamorous ſuitors!"

Ellinor, well pleaſed that he had began a ſubject that ſhe had wiſhed, but knew not how to commence, anſwered with one of her attractive ſmiles, that he had moſt truly read her thoughts; that ſhe would not impoſe on him by aſſuming a ſelf denying philoſophy ſhe did not feel; that ſhe had too high

an

an opinion of his judgement to attempt urging him to comply with her requeſt, after he had pointed out its abſurdity, and impropriety, and given it a decided negative; though, ſhe acknowledged, had not that been the caſe, ſhe, for once, would gladly have partook of a diverſion, of which ſhe had formed a very pleaſant idea, had it met his approbation. Her ſmall knowledge of the world did not enable her to ſee it in ſo dangerous a point of view as it appeared to him; that, as Lady Fanny had obſerved, all the party being known to each other, the gratification would ariſe from the *equivoque* and miſtakes of the company, which muſt terminate at ſupper when they unmaſked, and appeared in their original characters;—this would ſurely be the great treat of the evening." Sir James liſtened to her with a complacent ſmile of approbation while ſhe proceeded.

"I wiſh, my good Sir, I could perſuade you to withdraw your negative, and permit

Miſs Lavington to go with her friend Lady Fanny, as her heart appears ſo much ſet upon it; and, as her ladyſhip is your viſitor, will it not appear odd to go without her? I cannot think any harm can poſſibly happen from your indulgence, eſpecially if you and Lady Lavington are of the party. Forgive me, Sir; I fear I am committing myſelf to your diſpleaſure, by thus taking the liberty to combat with my weak arguments, reſolutions that appear to you ſo well founded."

"I confeſs, Ellinor, what you have ſaid, added to my own reflections ſince the morning, at which period I felt anger at the folly of Mrs. Oſwald's conduct, when I ought only to have pitied the weakneſs by which it was occaſioned, will oblige me to let you all make yourſelves ridiculous in your own way at this maſquerade; but I ſhall moſt certainly attend you."

"Thank you, my dear ſir, a thouſand times, for this condeſcenſion; in the name of my friends and myſelf, again and again I thank you. How *happy* I feel that I ſhall be

be able to carry this joyful intelligence to my dear Auguſta: pray let me be the firſt to acquaint her with it."

"You ſhall; and you may take all the merit of my compliance on the ſtrength of your own arguments, which ever muſt, with me, have their weight; for there is a faſcination in the tone of your *voice*, that vibrated ſo directly to my heart, from the firſt moment I heard you ſpeak, that, unaccountable even to myſelf, it had an effect upon my emotions, (like the ſubtle and inſtantaneous ſhock of electricity, which urges me to grant every requeſt you make), from the power it uſurps over my feelings, when even your arguments fail to convince my underſtanding." Taking her hand, he added, "my charming girl, as I have ſhewn *my* weakneſs, and *your* ſtrength, I truſt to your diſcretion, not to make an improper uſe of that power, convinced that I can deny you nothing."

He was proceeding, when they arrived at the ſtyle that led to the high-road, they ſaw Lady

Lady Fanny and Auguſta ſitting on their horſes, who had evidently overheard their diſcourſe. Ellinor, unconſcious how much appearances were againſt her, ſtarted only from ſurpriſe, ſuppoſing them to have been far diſtant; but Sir James, to whom the human countenance was as a book, in which he could read men's thoughts, ſaw the well-pleaſed malignity that darted from the eyes of Lady Fanny, while ſhe ſaid, "We ought, Auguſta, to beg pardon of Miſs Harcourt and Sir James, for arriving in ſo *critical* a moment of their intereſting *téte-a-téte*; juſt as ſhe had heard the delightful aſſurance, that nothing could be refuſed to ſuch a pleader. We have therefore robbed her of the opportunity of availing herſelf of the plenitude of her power; let us now purſue our ride, and beg Miſs Harcourt to uſe her *melodious voice*, that Sir James confeſſes he is incapable of reſiſting, to induce him to grant that boon to her that he refuſed to the united efforts of his wife, daughter, and gueſt; and, ſhould we ſucceed through your intereſt,

your

your petitioners will, as loyal ſubjects, be ever bound to pray." On finiſhing this bitter and ironical ſpeech, ſhe cantered away, and Auguſta followed.

Ellinor, ſurpriſed at this ſudden appearance, and aſtoniſhed at the ill-natured turn that Lady Fanny gave to the converſation, to which it was evident ſhe had been liſtening, appeared transfixed to the ſpot on which ſhe ſtood. Sir James, loſt in one of his abſtracted reveries, was ſilent: the behaviour of this faſhionable fair one, had, in the laſt five minutes, opened his eyes to the conſtruction a misjudging and malicious world would put on his conduct through the medium of her miſrepreſentations. Well he knew of what it was capable, and how many innocent objects were daily ſacrificed to falſe appearances, while the really guilty eſcaped detection.

He trembled for the character of Ellinor; he was aware, that if Lady Fanny recounted only

only what ſhe had juſt ſeen and heard, that the lovers of ſcandal would infer their own conſequences, and draw their own deductions; the reſult muſt be, that this amiable girl would no longer find his houſe a proper aſylum; nor could he with propriety appear again as her protector.—What was to be done? how was he to avert the threatened evil, that his unguarded ſuſceptibility had brought upon the ill-fated Ellinor.

He experienced regret the moſt poignant for letting the fatherly affection and tender friendſhip, he felt for this intereſting creature, appear ſo openly in his actions; that the frigid mortals who know not the gratification that ariſes from ſupporting the oppreſſed, protecting the deſerted, and exalting the humble, would not believe his conduct could be derived from motives by which they were never actuated, and would ſhew their ſcepticiſm by a ſhake of the head, a ſarcaſtic ſmile, or, as Swift deſcribes,

"Convey

"Convey a libel in a frown,
"And wink a reputation down."

Theſe were the thoughts that employed Sir James as he walked, muſing by the ſide of Ellinor, till ſhe came to the cottages ſhe was to viſit: he then told her ſhe would find him in the meadow in the road to Avon Place, where he ſhould wait till ſhe had finiſhed her charitable occupation.

After he left her, ſhe proceeded to Lady Lavington's patients,—gave them directions how to act,—ſoothed their pain by her kind commiſeration,—cheered their diſtreſſed ſpirits, by pointing out the flatterer hope,—and, from her contracted purſe, relieved their preſent moſt preſſing wants: ſhe then tripped towards Sir James, her own cares forgot in the godlike ſatisfaction of having mitigated the ſorrows of theſe honeſt ruſtics, whoſe thanks and bleſſings echoed in her ears, and vibrated to her heart, till ſhe gained the road to follow Sir James, who ſhe ſaw before her

her, apparently loſt in meditation, walking with ſlow and meaſured ſteps. This recalled her thoughts to Lady Fanny's behaviour, and on the change it apparently made in the ſpirits of her benefactor; ſhe began to fear it boded no good to herſelf: but of the kind of injury ſhe was to ſuſtain, ſhe had no idea; for, of her own actions, ſhe thought, innocent of intentional evil, ſhe ſhould be exculpated for the errours that want of worldly knowledge might lead her to commit. She could not for one moment allow herſelf to think, that the beſt feelings of our nature, affection and gratitude to the object where our obligations are juſtly due, could be brought againſt her as a crime; nor ſuppoſe that a human being exiſted ſo completely depraved as to annex any motives for the actions of ſuch a man as Sir James Lavington, but the moſt liberal, honourable, and diſintereſted.

Having joined Sir James, ſhe tried to begin a converſation; but he appeared ſo wrapped

wrapped up in his own contemplations, and, by the anſwers he made to her queſtions, ſo evidently abſent, that ſhe was ſilent for the remainder of their way to Avon Place.

In the park they met Lady Fanny and Auguſta juſt alighted from their horſes. Ellinor began to talk of the maſquerade, and that ſhe believed Sir James would conſent to their going.

"For which mighty favour," replied her ladyſhip, "we are to acknowledge an obligation to the all-powerful notes of your melifluous voice, that is alone a hoſt, and has charmed the inexorable Sir James to grant what he this morning refuſed to natural affection and politeneſs; but he can deny "*you nothing*."

Ellinor, whoſe high ſpirit could no longer brook her repeated taunts and ſlanderous inuendoes, anſwered—

"I know not, Lady Fanny, what you mean to imply by thoſe ironical hints, and ſarcaſtic compliments on my power over Sir James; I am not conſcious of

of having any in the extent you have pointed out. Of this I am aſſured, whatever I poſſeſs, I have always uſed it to promote, not my own, but the pleaſures and emoluments of others. Of undue influence and ſelfiſh gratification, my conſcience acquits me. I am equally incapable of entering a family, to act as a *ſpy* upon their actions, and, by a chemical proceſs of my own, extract from the crucible of ſcandal, deleterious poiſon from the moſt innocent ingredients; which your ladyſhip has contrived to do this evening with ſo much ingenuity, if I rightly comprehend your preſent hints.

"It is moſt true that, when Sir James, in our walk to the village, began to talk of the *bal maſqué*, I cheerfully undertook to plead with him to withdraw his anathema againſt this forbidden diverſion, that Miſs Lavington and you, under his auſpices, might ſhare in it, knowing it would give you pleaſure. I felt a gratification in the thought of being a meſſenger of ſuch joyful tidings; and was juſt thanking Sir James for conferring

ring upon me that happineſs, when I perceived that you and my friend had been ſilent witneſſes of the ſucceſs of my negociations for your ſervice; but, why my exertions have been by you *wilfully* miſinterpreted, I know not; or why, a ſpeech made by Sir James, which you interrupted by your remarks, without hearing him finiſh what he had to ſay, ſhould occaſion this behaviour, I am yet to learn. Of this you may reſt aſſured, nothing could induce me to inſult the loweſt of my fellow-creatures; nor any conſiderations of intereſt or pleaſure prevail on me to ſuffer myſelf to be inſulted with impunity, by the moſt exalted."

Lady Fanny had too much art to permit the preſent *fracas* to proceed to an open quarrel, as Ellinor's candour and ingeniouſneſs in recounting her ſtory, would have convinced her auditors that ſhe was innocent, and the miſchief ſhe intended would have reverted on herſelf: neither did ſhe chooſe to appear to the world in the character

character of an accuſer; ſhe meant to ruin her by *ſlow* but *ſure* methods: therefore, advancing to Ellinor as ſoon as ſhe had done ſpeaking, ſhe held out her hand, and ſaid—"Miſs Harcourt, you have taken ſeriouſly what at firſt was meant as a joke, which my wicked wit induced me to venture, on ſeeing the ſober, philoſophical Sir James Lavington preſſing the fair hand, and whiſpering ſoft nothings, in the ear of a beautiful girl, young enough to be his daughter. But, as you have ſaid ſome very acrimonious things to me, I preſume you will think you are amply revenged for an unintentional offence."

Ellinor believed not one word that Lady Fanny had uttered; but, thinking her capable of glutting her vengeance, by means the moſt attrocious, and bringing charges againſt her of the moſt ſhocking nature, ſhe thought it prudent to let her ſuppoſe that ſhe admitted her excuſe, and believed what ſhe had ad-

vanced to be mere *badinage*: ſhe therefore accepted her offered hand.

The converſation now turned upon what dreſſes they ſhould wear, and what characters they were to appear in at Morton Abbey. Lady Fanny, who was a fine graceful figure, and delighted in ſhewing herſelf in the moſt ſplendid point of view, ſaid ſhe ſhould ſend to town for the dreſs of a Sultana, which ſhe had worn at the laſt maſquerade at the opera houſe: "then," ſaid Ellinor, as I wiſh not to be conſpicuous, and give myſelf no credit for being able to ſupport a character, if you have no objection, I will attend your ladyſhip in the dreſs of a ſlave."

"Very humble indeed, my dear Ellinor," ſhe replied, laughing, "but very politic alſo, for you will literally ſtoop to conquer: no doubt, as your faithful mirror has ſo often reflected your charms, you cannot be inſenſible of their power, or what would ſhew them to the beſt advantage, that the ſymmetry of your elegant figure, your fine hair,

beautiful

beautiful hands and arms, could in no character you might have fixed on, be ſhewn with ſuch ſtriking effect as in the dreſs of a Grecian ſlave: you will at leaſt acquit me of the paſſion of *envy* when I accept your offer, and allow my diamonds to be rivalled by the ſuperiour brightneſs of your eyes."

Ellinor, who perceived that her artful ladyſhip had ſome point to carry by thus loading her with fulſome compliments, determined not to appear to miſtruſt her, but to keep on her guard againſt her artifices: ſhe anſwered, ſhe had no view in chooſing the habit of a ſlave, but becauſe it appeared to her the moſt modeſt, as an attendant ſatellite on ſo bright a planet as her ladyſhip, ſhe hoped to be enlightened by the reflection of her rays, being content to ſhine with borrowed luſtre. As flattery never came amiſs to Lady Fanny, nor could be too high ſeaſoned for her palate, this of Ellinor's, though from the woman her ſoul hated, was received with pleaſure, and ſwallowed with avidity.

Auguſta, not underſtanding the delicate deceptions of Lady Fanny, nor her motives for uſing them, could not reconcile her preſent behaviour to Ellinor, with the recent ideas of the improper character, with which ſhe had endeavoured to impreſs her mind all that morning; but ſhe determined, as ſoon as they were alone, to ſeek an explanation from her friend of what appeared ſo enigmatical.

As Auguſta could determine on no character without the approbation of Lady Lavington, they repaired to the drawing-room, where they found Sir James: it was agreed that he ſhould go as Proſpero, his daughter as Miranda, and Lady Lavington as a quaker. They thought that, by aſſuming diſguiſes ſo oppoſite, they ſhould not appear to belong to the ſame party, and it would help to give a variety to the amuſements; for it could not be expected to be as numerouſly attended as a maſquerade in the metropolis.

CHAP. XII.

WE now return to take a view of the inhabitants of Morton-Abbey, who were all buſineſs, buſtle and preparation. Colonel Campley was, by univerſal conſent, choſe maſter of the ceremonies; every thing was done according to his orders. Mrs. Oſwald had never ſeen a maſquerade, and her daughters knew nothing of one, but from the accounts they had read in the Lady's Magazine; but they thought it muſt be charming to hear men make love, and to be able to anſwer from under a maſk without fear of bluſhing. Young Oſwald rejoiced that, under a feigned character, he ſhould be able to

to tell the divine Lady Fanny how much he was her adorer, without apprehenſion of being ſilenced for his temerity for daring to aſpire to quarter his arms with her noble bearings. His mother's *great* heart, which expanded at the conſequence ſhe ſhould acquire by excelling all the county in the ſuperior taſte and elegance of her entertainment, could with difficulty be kept in its equilibrium, though fenced with iron, and caſed in whale-bone.

Could the former proprietors of Morton-Abbey have taken a view of it at the preſent moment, they would not have recognized their quiet poſſeſſions, ſince they had experienced the taſteful and fantaſtical alterations of the all-accompliſhed Campley! The gothic windows, and ſpiral turrets, even the arms of the family of Oſwald, rudely cut in ſtone over the front gateway, were all hung round with ſmall various-coloured lamps; the dreary avenue, that had for centuries been in indiſputed poſſeſſion of a long line of rooks, whoſe

close branches were alike impervious, to Sol's brightest beams, as to the rude blasts of Boreas, were now fated to experience the intrusion of light. These consecrated trees, and their sable inhabitants, like mighty empires, were doomed to experience a revolution. The despotic Colonel gave the word of command to his followers, to hang festoons of lamps pendant from the trees, as it would give a brilliant effect in the approach to the house. Great was the destruction to the cawing race, by the execution of his high behest;

"The *rook* shall rue, that's yet unborn,
"The slaughter of that day."

Their houses destroyed, their embrios thrown in wanton sport to the ground, or strung on pack-thread, were hung up as trophies of the cruelties of their persecutors, to grace the servants hall; while their unfledged young were guillotined on the field of carnage, to be made into pies to glut the appetite of their barbarous despoilers. This was not

not a conqueſt quietly yielded to by the invaded: the ſhrieks of parents for their young—lovers for their mates, were heard for miles around, threatening dire and portentous evils to their foes, while they roſe *en maſſe*, flapping their wings, and ſcreaming in the ears of their affrighted aſſailants.

The miſeries of theſe ſable ſufferers was ſport to the lords of the creation: their piteous cries did not deter them from proceeding, till, like the followers of Columbus, they had executed the purpoſe for which they had invaded the rookiſh kingdom. The inſide of this devoted abbey ſuffered equally from the dilapidating Colonel's innovations. The ſober cedar parlour, oak dining-room, and ſombre ſaloon, were ornamented with feſtoons of coloured ſilk and paper roſes, and appropriated as ſupper-rooms. The long picture gallery, and ſuite of apartments contiguous, were deſigned for the dancers.—To take from their ſombre appearance, they had covered up the heroes and heroines of the

family, with the ſame gew-gaw drapery that ornamented the lower rooms. The trees in the park, and thoſe ſurrounding the houſe, were hung with numerous lamps; that, if the company choſe to wander, as much light might be thrown on the ſubject as poſſible. The temples raiſed by the family of Oſwald, and dedicated to love and chaſtity, by order of the Colonel, alike glowed with ſubtle fire.

Our readers are too well acquainted with the character of Campley, to imagine that he propoſed a maſquerade to Mrs. Oſwald, and gave himſelf all this trouble to gratify her vanity, or to give pleaſure to any of the party: no, ſelf was ever his end and aim:—and, to make others ſubſervient to his purpoſes, was the ultimate object of all his actions. He thought this kind of amuſement beſt calculated to prevail, even on the cautious Ellinor, to throw off the trammels of worldly reſtraint, that, under the diſguiſe he meant to aſſume, he could once more try his fortune; or, ſhould that fail him, he was reſolved

reſolved, as a *derniere* reſource, to alarm the jealouſy of Lady Lavington; for he would not allow himſelf to doubt his ſucceſs with Ellinor, could he once get her from under the protection of Sir James: he was conſcious this muſt be attempted warily; for it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould ſuppoſe him her friend, not her enemy.

Campley, obliged to fly from the yawning and vulgar ſociety that compoſed the circle at Morton Abbey, to reading novels, wandering through groves, liſtening to the ſoft notes of the nightingale, or to the dalhing of the caſcade, had perſuaded himſelf that he was violently in love with Ellinor, and get her into his poſſeſſion he muſt—by what means was a matter of indifference, as his conſcience was long ſince grown too callous to be deterred by ſcrupulous delicacy, or his carreer to ſenſual gratification, ſtopped by what leſs hardened and more ſqueamiſh mortals would call a diſhonourable action.

While our poor heroine was thus beſet by foes, and traps laid for her, from which it was next to a miracle if ſhe eſcaped.—She was very far from ſeeing her danger; for, though ſince he accompanied her to the village, Sir James had appeared unuſually ſerious, and it was evident his mind was oppreſſed: it did not occur to her imagination that ſhe was the object of his concern.—Convinced that Lady Fanny only acted a part in her attentions to her, and that, in ſecret, ſhe was her enemy, her ſuſpicions never reached ſo far, as to ſuppoſe ſhe would aim at her *total* deſtruction, by robbing her of reputation, the only poſſeſſion left her by fate.

She often found Lady Fanny and Auguſta in cloſe conſultation, which, at her entrance, they broke off abruptly.—The latter appeared to have withdrawn from her all the attentions of friendſhip, either anſwered her queſtions with petulance, or treated her with diſtant hauteur, and frequently talked *at* her

in

in ſatirical remarks to Lady Fanny. This gave Ellinor much uneaſineſs; ſhe thought it was occaſioned by the leſſons of her ladyſhip, and when ſhe left Avon-Place, all would be well again. She had hitherto been encouraged by the kind friendſhip of Sir James, to complain to him of all her little troubles; but he now appeared rather to avoid than ſeek her ſociety. Matters were thus ſituated, when one morning ſhe ſaw Sir Harry Hurry ride up to the gate. He bowed to her as ſhe ſtood at the window, and was then ſhown into the library; where, at the end of an hour, he departed, without paying his compliments to the ladies. While ſhe was wondering what could be the occaſion of his conducting himſelf ſo differently from his uſual manner, ſhe received a meſſage from Sir James, requeſting to ſee her in his ſtudy. She followed the ſervant, and found him buried in a profound reverie, from which he ſtarted at her entrance, and pointing to a chair that Sir Harry had juſt

quitted, deſired her to be ſeated, when he thus addreſſed her :—

" Miſs Harcourt, I ſent for you, to inform you of what, in your *preſent* ſituation, gives me pleaſure. Sir Harry Hurry, with whoſe perſon you are acquainted, of a reſpectable family, and poſſeſſed of a good fortune, has juſt left me ; he came to ſolicit my intereſt with you to do him the honour of accepting his hand. As he knows you have no expectations, his offer is both flattering and diſintereſted : he has generouſly propoſed to make you a very liberal ſettlement. If your heart is not pre-engaged, or does not feel a repugnance to Sir Harry, I ſhould be happy to ſee you his wife and my neighbour." He pauſed for her anſwer.

Ellinor, all aſtoniſhment at a propoſal ſhe ſo little expected to receive, was ſilent : but leſt Sir James ſhould ſuppoſe ſhe was deliberating on the offer, ſhe thus ſpoke :—" I feel moſt gratefully obliged to Sir Harry for the

the honour of his preference, and for his generous intentions in my favour, which I ſhould ill repay, by allowing him to preſent to the world as his wife; not as he ſuppoſes, the orphan of a man of family, but the outcaſt and deſerted child, in all human probability, of an illegitimate connexion; perhaps ſprung from the loweſt order of ſociety, at leaſt on one ſide; ſo their ſecreſy, and my deſerted ſtate, gives too much reaſon to believe you know, Sir James, as much of my ſtory as I am myſelf acquainted with; and the exalted ſentiments of truth and rectitude you poſſeſs muſt approve of my determination, when I avow I will never marry any man till the myſtery of my birth is diſcloſed.

"Not knowing to whom I am related, or to whom I am indebted for exiſtence, my blood would recoil with horror at becoming a wife, ſituated as I am, were I unfortunately in love with Sir Harry. I dare truſt to the ſtrength of my principles to conquer the impulſes of paſſion; but, in the preſent inſtance, I ſhould not have that to plead my excuſe.

I never had an idea that Sir Harry Hurry would condeſcend to ſeek an alliance with me; nor is he the kind of man I could be happy with, did I think myſelf at liberty to marry; as I am of opinion, that a congeniality of mind and purſuits are not to be diſpenſed with in thoſe who are to paſs their lives together. I believe it to be very poſſible to eſteem the perſon we don't love, and to love the perſon we cannot eſteem. I think I ſhould not feel any heſitation in giving the preference to the former, if ever it became a caſe in point, in reſpect to myſelf. At preſent I candidly own, that I am not impelled by either motive. I muſt therefore entreat you will do me the favour to acquaint Sir Harry, that I politely, though poſitively, decline the honour of his hand."

Sir James heard her to the end of her ſpeech, without interruption: he had, in her preſent conduct, a new cauſe to admire the ſtrength of her judgment, the integrity of her heart, and the rectitude of her behaviour.—

He

He ſighed as he reflected, that ſuch a woman was likely to be expoſed to all the miſeries of dependence, on the rich and unfeeling, by the clouds he ſaw ready to burſt over her, and which he could not avert: he truſted much to her powerful and energetic mind to ſupport her in the hour of trial.

Sir James ſaid, "you have as you merit, my good girl, my higheſt approbation for your preſent conduct; I admire your honourable reaſon for remaining ſingle, till you are acknowledged by your parents; but I grieve that they ſhould refuſe themſelves the happineſs of embracing and rewarding the merits of ſuch a good daughter. I truſt your time of probation will ſoon be over; that you will be received to their arms and to their hearts, and through them find your proper place in ſociety."

"I thank you, Sir James, for your good wiſhes; but pray tell me why you ſaid you rejoiced at Sir Harry's offer. *Situated* as I am at *preſent*, where can I be ſo well as in your

your family? to whom I owe such numerous obligations; by whom I have been so kindly treated. Have I been so unfortunate as to incur their displeasure; am I fated to lose their protection? You do not answer. Sorrow and pity are blended in your eyes.—Tell me—oh tell me the worst I have to fear: prepare me for the blow; it will be like yourself, good and merciful; that, if I cannot ward it off, I may bear it with becoming fortitude."

"My dear child, you affect me poignantly; do not thus alarm yourself; all will, I trust, yet be well: you have an enemy, who, envious of your merits, I fear meditates to do you an injury. I am miserable in the extreme: as I doubt my friendship for you, and my inattention to the cold forms, dictated by the wary world, in my manner of expressing it, has exposed you to disagreeable animadversions, from the misjudging, who will not give a man credit for attempting to serve a beautiful woman from disinterested motives: but, be assured, in me you shall

ever

ever find a firm and ſincere *friend*, who will ſupport you with his fortune, and, at the hazard of his life, will juſtify your character from calumny; therefore take comfort, my ſweet girl, and forgive me for being the cauſe of your ſorrow."

Ellinor, who had been drowned in tears through the whole of this ſpeech, franticly claſping her hands, exclaimed, "Now the veil drops; I ſee all the miſery of my future deſtiny:—driven a wanderer from your hoſpitable roof—robbed of my only inheritance, an unblemiſhed character; who will receive me into their family, when I am deſcribed as a ſnake which ſtung the boſom that foſtered me; will not every door be ſhut againſt me? Shall I not be avoided as a peſtilence by my own ſex, and hunted down as fair game by yours? I exculpate you, Sir James, from all blame; the goodneſs of your heart has expoſed you to the artifices of the wicked: my ignorance of a bad world, and the grateful ſatisfaction I felt for your flattering

tering attentions, which I checked not the honeſt effuſions of my boſom in avowing, has laid me open to cenſure, and expoſed me to illiberal ſtrictures.

"I ſee we ſhall be both ſacrificed to calumny, with the beſt intentions, and from the worthieſt ſenſations of the human heart; for the blow aimed at my character muſt affect yours. I thank you moſt gratefully for your offers of future protection; but you will, on mature reflection, perceive the impoſſibility of my accepting them; nor muſt you think of venturing a life ſo truly eſtimable, for a being of ſuch little conſequence in the ſcale of creation as myſelf. Conſider, Sir, you are a huſband and a father, and thoſe relations you are called upon to ſupport: if I am obliged to quit your family, my only happineſs will ariſe from ſuppoſing that I am the ſole ſufferer, and that peace will again ſpread its pinions over it: when I, a devoted victim for the faults of my parents, am expoſed to inſult, poverty, and ſhame. Such is the delicacy of my ſituation reſpecting

ing you, Sir, that we muſt meet no *more*.—So far from receiving any pecuniary aſſiſtance from you, my firſt place will be to take ſuch meaſures that you muſt not even know how I diſpoſe of myſelf, though in my oriſons your goodneſs will never be forgotten."

Sir James conteſted thoſe arguments with all the warmth of friendſhip; pointed out, that if ſhe threw herſelf among ſtrangers without money, ſhe would be expoſed to a thouſand hardſhips, and hydra-headed dangers, of which it was impoſſible ſhe could form any idea; that he did not aſk to ſee her, but only to be her banker, till her own relations found it convenient to come forward. This Ellinor poſitively refuſed, not from being too proud to accept the obligation, for that would be abſurd after what ſhe had already received; but becauſe it was impoſſible to juſtify laying herſelf under more in her preſent ſituation.

Sir

Sir James then urged, that he might have been miſtaken in his ideas of the reaſon of Lady Fanny's behaviour; at all events they muſt quietly wait for her plot, if ſhe had one, to unravel itſelf, and not appear conſcious of guilt by ſhewing a premature reſentment. He concluded by ſaying, it had not been his intentions to have mentioned to Ellinor his doubts and fears, had ſhe not appeared ſo agitated. He again preſſed her to accept Sir Harry's generous offer, which would give her a protector, lift her into conſequence with the world, and make Lady Fanny's ſcandel fall harmleſs; as it would be underſtood to ariſe from the ſpleen of a forſaken woman, it being very well known that all the laſt winter ſhe had ſpread her nets for the young baronet.

Ellinor ſaid ſhe had no doubt that all Sir James had urged was right and proper; but ſhe could not marry Sir Harry, and therefore muſt intreat that he would give him her anſwer.

After

After he had brought her to conſent to take no notice for the preſent of Lady Fanny's behaviour, but to wait till it explained itſelf, ſhe was juſt going to retire, her eyes red with weeping, and her heart ſurcharged with ſorrow. On opening the door of the ſtudy, ſhe encountered Lady Fanny and Auguſta, when the former addreſſed her with—"You have had a long audience, Ellinor; I fear your boon has not been granted, if I may judge from your woe-begone countenance, and tell-tale eyes."

Her boſom ſwelling with reſentment againſt the taunts of her deadly foe, ſhe turned on her with a look of ironical ſcorn, and, ſmiling contemptuouſly, ſaid—"My grief is not cauſed by a rejected ſuit, as I have this moment given my refuſal to one that your ladyſhip would with eagerneſs accept." She paſſed on; but ſhe heard Lady Fanny ſay to Auguſta, "what can the inſolent creature mean?"

Thus

Thus our heroine proved herſelf a very woman; for, though ſhe had but a moment before promiſed that ſhe would not ſhew any reſentment at Lady Fanny's ſarcaſms, till ſhe had ſeen how far ſhe meant to injure her; yet, no ſooner did ſhe utter a ſatirical inuendo, than Ellinor, knowing ſhe had it in her power to triumph over her in *one* point, having rivalled her in the heart of her favourite Sir Harry, than ſhe was tempted to make the retort courteous.

CHAP

CHAP. XIII.

WHEN the family aſſembled at dinner, little was ſaid; but, after the ſervants retired, Lady Fanny and Auguſta amuſed themſelves with laughing and ſneering at Ellinor, which Lady Lavington, who was not yet in the ſecret, could not underſtand; while Sir James beheld Lady Fanny's behaviour with reſentment, and that of his daughter with regret, as he reflected how rejoiced he was a few weeks ſince, when he had fondly hoped the example of Ellinor would have rendered her mind and manners like her own, which were every thing a fond parent could wiſh. In that ſhort ſpace of time

time, had this woman of quality, like the ſerpent at the ear of Eve, by her arts blighted all his new found pleaſures, ariſing from an intercourſe with his family, had ſown thoſe ſeeds of miſtruſt in their minds, which muſt terminate in the diſmiſſal of Ellinor, and drive him back to the inmoſt receſſes of his library to ſeek thoſe amuſements from literature, that he had juſt began to find in ſociety, ſince the intereſting, intelligent, and cheerful Ellinor had formed a part of his houſehold.

Ellinor was ruminating deeply intent on her misfortunes, when Lady John Dareall was announced, for it was her method not to be reſtrained to what is called *viſiting* hours. On her entrance ſhe ſhook Sir James by the hand; told Lady Lavington that ſhe had made a glorious ſlaughter among the partridges that morning, and had ſtopped at Avon Place to lay the ſpoils at her ladyſhip's feet. "Why, my little blooming Hebe," cried Lady John, patting Ellinor's cheek, "do you look

ſo ſad and ſolemn? You that have made a conqueſt of the fineſt fellow in the county ſhould be all ſmiles and triumph? Nay, don't bluſh, child, I am in the ſecret. — Harry came to the hall laſt night to tell me he was determined to offer himſelf to your acceptance. He had ſome quality notions *once* in his head, not of his own creation, inſtilled into it by that old perpetual pedigree hunter his lady-mother; therefore thought of ſacrificing himſelf and fortune to ſome indigent woman of faſhion, whom he would have been tired of in a *month*, and divorced from in a *year*."

Here ſhe turned her expreſſive eyes full upon Lady Fanny, who from the time ſhe began, had been writhing on her ſeat, as if ſhe had been ſuffering all the tortures of Tartarus, while Lady John continued to follow up her victory. "By remarking that cheerful good-humour, unaffected manners, and genuine red and white, had gained the important victory."

Harry

"Harry, finding his choice met my perfect approbation, drank a bottle of claret to your health, and to his own ſucceſs, and left me, happy as hope could make him, determined to pay his devoirs to Sir James this morning. Has he been here?"

"Yes," replied Sir James, "I had the honour of his viſit."

"Well then, Ellinor, what ſay you to his offer; is he not a generous fellow? Don't ſtand ſhilly ſhally, but ſay yes at once, and come and be my neighbour; I am ſure you are a girl of mettle; we ſhall be able to make ſomething of you when we get you from your knotting and embroidery."

Ellinor, whoſe confuſion encreaſed every moment, looked with eyes of intreaty upon Sir James to extricate her from her preſent dilemma; who, comprehending her meaning, told Lady John, that, in conſequence of the viſit he had received from Sir Harry, he ſhould wait on that gentleman to-morrow, and give him an account of the ſucceſs of his

his negociation. This anſwer, meant to miſlead Lady John, had the deſired effect; ſhe ſoon took her leave, telling Ellinor that the next time they met, ſhe hoped ſhe would have baniſhed from her pretty face thoſe woeful tints, and re-inſtated to their places the ſmiles and dimples.

After Lady John had galloped away, a dead ſilence reigned for ſome minutes; it was broke by Lady Lavington's telling Sir James, ſhe thought ſhe might have been made acquainted with Sir Harry's offer to Ellinor.

"There has been no time for communication; for I had but juſt told the lady moſt concerned, and who undoubtedly had a right to the firſt information on the ſubject, before the dinner bell rung; Lady John has ſince been ſufficiently communicative to gratify curioſity. I do not think myſelf at liberty to ſay another word upon the ſubject, till I have delivered my anſwer to the baronet."

Ellinor now quitted the room, and Auguſta took up the converſation, ſaying, "I ſuppoſe, ſir, there is no doubt but Ellinor has received this offer moſt joyfully; for to take place of her betters, by marrying a man of conſequence and fortune, will feed her pride, and make her more inſufferably *vain* than ever."

"I am aſhamed, Auguſta," replied Sir James, "to witneſs the weakneſs of your head, and the depravity of your heart, that can give ſuch a falſe colouring to the character of a young woman you called your friend a few months ago, who has exerted all her talents for your pleaſure and amuſement: unfortunately for you ſhe could not infuſe into your mind the energy ſhe poſſeſſes, that gives conſequence to her opinions, and deciſion to her reſolves; therefore you are trifling, imbecile, fluctuating in your attachments, and unſteady in your purſuits: this lays you conſtantly open to be practiſed on by the ſubtle and malicious, who flatter your vanity, and humour your caprices. While

you think you are forming your own judgment, you are but an agent in the hands of another, who prompts behind the curtain the part you are to perform." Seeing Auguſta much affected and mortified at this diſcourſe, he added, "my dear child, to be valued, you muſt *think* for yourſelf; the undecided and wavering never gain eſteem; their friendſhips are the ephemera of a day, which are too unſteady to be ſought by the eſtimable and diſcerning part of the world."

Lady Fanny clearly ſaw by this ſpeech of Sir James, that he perfectly underſtood her character, and meant that ſhe ſhould comprehend as much. Vexed in the extreme to think that all her deep-laid plots would prove abortive; that Ellinor would eventually triumph by accepting Sir Harry, for ſhe had no idea that the dependant of Lady Lavington could refuſe his offered hand, that would emancipate her from the ſlavery attached to her preſent ſituation. She aroſe,

ſaying to Auguſta, " when Sir James has finiſhed his lecture, you will join me in the garden, for I am quite *ennuied* with hearing of the ſuperlatives of this Ellinor, who, being held up as a pattern for the world to follow, to make the picture more glowing, all other women are thrown into *ſhadow*."

Saying this, with a quality toſs of her head, ſhe quitted the room; Sir James, looking after her, ſaid, " *you* are too incorrigible to mend; but I hope better things from you Auguſta, who was becoming all I wiſhed, till this deteſtable woman arrived and poiſoned your ears with falſe repreſentations. What would I not give if ſhe had never entered this houſe, for ſhe has a head capable of planning any kind of miſchief, and a heart black enough to execute it. I hope ſhe will ſoon leave my family, whoſe domeſtic comfort ſhe has totally deſtroyed. You may, child, follow her ladyſhip, for while ſhe is our gueſt, her ill conduct will be no excuſe for

for an omiſſion of the duties of politeneſs, or the rights of hoſpitality."

Sir James the next morning made his viſit to Leveret Lodge, and acquainted Sir Harry that Miſs Harcourt felt grateful for his preference; but, having at preſent no intention to marry, ſhe begged leave to decline his offers, liberal as they were.

The Baronet expreſſed his regret; ſaid he was an unlucky dog; admired the generoſity of her conduct for not accepting his eſtate, when ſhe could not love its owner; added, that he ſhould always eſteem her, and hoped ſhe would honour him with a claim to her friendſhip, though ſhe would not allow him a place in her heart.

This, Sir James ſaid, he would venture to promiſe, as his very correct conduct muſt ever enſure to him the grateful remembrance of ſuch a woman as Ellinor. He requeſted

to know if it was his wiſh that his addreſſes to Miſs Harcourt ſhould be kept a ſecret?

"Not at all, Sir James; I am not aſhamed of being refuſed: as to the laugh of my companions, that's nothing; for, in all probability they would not have been a jot more fortunate, had they made the effort."

Sir Harry was not a ſighing dying adorer; had Ellinor accepted him, he would have loved her as much as was in his nature. He had firſt formed the wiſh to make her his wife from ſeeing her very proper behaviour, when receiving the apology of Mrs. Campley at Avon Place. By meeting Lady Fanny and Ellinor often together, he was led to compare the courtly indolence and inſolent *hauteur* of the former, with the lively animation and the cheerful unaſſuming manners of the latter,—ever deſirous to pleaſe, ever ready to oblige, it was impoſſible to deliberate a moment to which he ſhould give the preference, as a partner for life: though refuſed

refuſed by Ellinor, he was determined not to offer himſelf to Lady Fanny; ſhe had cured him of his quality *mania*, and determined him, when the *ſcar* he had received from the bright eyes of Ellinor was ſkinned over, that he would look round the blooming nymphs whoſe father's ſeats ſkirted the foreſt, and chooſe from among them a wife, for the old-faſhioned charms of an unadulterated complexion, an affectionate heart, and cheerful good humour.

As ſoon as Sir James returned from Leveret Lodge, Lady Lavington, who was ſitting with Lady Fanny and Auguſta, ſaid, "well, I ſuppoſe it is all ſettled; when are we to loſe Ellinor? is the match to take place ſoon? I ſuppoſe I may preſume to aſk thoſe queſtions *now*?"

"Moſt undoubtedly; and, as I am not reſtrained by any promiſe of ſecreſy, I will moſt cheerfully anſwer them, which I do by ſaying, it is *all ſettled*, but not to the ſatisfaction

of Sir Harry, as I left him *au des eſpoir*, at being refuſed by Miſs Harcourt."

"Did I hear you right?" exclaimed Lady Lavington; "what could induce Ellinor to reject ſo advantageous an offer, ſuch as ſhe muſt *never* expect to meet again?"

"The cauſes," Sir James replied, "are no doubt good and ſufficient in her opinion; but it is not neceſſary to diſcuſs the nature of them at the preſent moment."

Lady Fanny, whoſe face was expreſſive of joyful ſurpriſe and revived hope, ſaid, that ſurely there muſt be great and forcible reaſons that could induce ſuch a young woman to refuſe a ſplendid eſtabliſhment.

"Your ladyſhip judges right; the motives of honour and rectitude, by which Ellinor's conduct have been actuated, would have had no weight with the generality of her ſex; but you muſt excuſe her, ſhe acts from the impulſes of her heart, and of worldly prudence knows *nothing*."

Finding

Finding they could not prevail on Sir James to become explicit, the converſation dropped, and the maſquerade, on which ſo many hopes and fears were founded, that was now to take place in a few days, was talked over. Ellinor, whoſe ſociety was rather ſhunned than courted, had employed herſelf in fancying and making a dreſs for the character ſhe had choſen; Lady Fanny, who could alone have inſtructed her in what was moſt proper, was perfectly taciturn upon the ſubject, charitably hoping that ſhe would make herſelf ridiculous, while ſhe had wrote to London for her ſplendid Sultana's robe, &c. to which ſhe meant to add all the embelliſhments of diamonds and pearls.

Lady Fanny's maid, Mrs. Homely, was an artful girl, deep in her ladyſhip's ſecrets, who had been taken into her ſervice after having lived ſeven years with a faſhionable French milliner of intriguing notoriety; a ſituation that rendered her perfectly capable of her preſent place: with a genteel figure, and a

plain face, ſhe was as miſchievous and as artful as her lady. She ſuppoſed herſelf a woman of education, becauſe ſhe could write three or four different hands, which was of great uſe to Lady Fanny in carrying on her anonymous correſpondence, and ſending ſcandalous paragraphs of her acquaintance to the morning papers. Added to this, ſhe had read every novel that had been produced in the laſt ten years, good, bad, and indifferent; thoſe, aſſiſted by her propenſities, had made her a perfect adept in *intrigue*, and a deſirable acquiſition to Lady Fanny, who now offered Mrs. Homely's ſervices to plan Auguſta's dreſs, who would not condeſcend to aſk either the advice or aſſiſtance of Ellinor.

CHAP. X.

AT length the long-desired evening of the masquerade arrived, and the party at Avon-Place, all, except Ellinor, were assembled in the drawing-room, to whom a servant was sent to say they waited for her; but when she made her appearance, Lady Fanny was ready to expire with envy at the graceful and beautiful form that was a basilisk to her eyes; by whose side, she forsaw, in despite of diamonds, pearls, and foil, that she should only play a second part. Augusta had all the bad propensities of her nature roused by the machinations of Lady Fanny, when she reflected, that a being who derived all her

conſequence from the partiality of her father, and who herſelf had been lately taught to ook upon in no other view than as an upper ſervant—that ſhe ſhould dare to have faſcinations ſo ſuperior to her own; and, by ſtudied elegance, throw her into the back ground, was inſufferable. Lady Lavington, after meaſuring Ellinor with her eyes, ſaid, "Pray when did you receive your dreſs from London? At whoſe warehouſe was it made? I think you need not have kept it ſo profound a ſecret: I ſhould have liked Auguſta to have had one of the ſame."

"I can aſſure your ladyſhip I had it from no warehouſe in London, but planned and executed it myſelf; neither did I wiſh to keep it any ſecret, as what I meant to wear was never enquired after by you or the young ladies: I thought it would be deemed a preſumption in me to force it on your notice."

Sir James, who read in their faces the different paſſions by which they were actuated towards our oppreſſed heroine, urged their inſtant

inſtant departure, by ſaying, if they ſtaid any longer, they ſhould find it difficult to get the carriage up to the door. Before we follow them to the Abbey, we will deſcribe Ellinor's dreſs, which had given ſo much offence.

It was perfectly ſimple, and received all its conſequence from the wearer: it was that of a Greek ſlave, compoſed of fine clear muſlin, over white ſilk, which fell in full and graceful folds on the ground. Her fine turned arms were naked above the elbow; the ſleeves were full, and confined with gold: the zone about her waiſt was the ſame, from the middle of which depended a long gilt chain: the ends were faſtened with claſps on her wriſts; her gloſſy hair, without powder, was braided, and twiſted round her head with ſpangled fillets, like the buſts of thoſe Grecian beauties, that the depredations of time have ſpared. Her neck and ears were ornamented with gold; on her feet ſhe wore white ſatin ſandals, laced with cords.

Her

Her light and graceful figure was ſhewn to the utmoſt advantage by this dreſs, which was pictureſque, and appropriate to the character ſhe had choſen.

When the coach drove up the avenue, they were ſtruck with the grand effect of the various coloured lamps depending from the trees, which we have before obſerved, occaſioned ſo much deſolation to their ſable inhabitants, who were now, with flapping wings, and portentous ſcreams, hovering over their dilapidated dwellings, threatening direful evil to thoſe to whoſe amuſements all their comforts had been ſacrificed.

The ſullen ſilence that had reigned during our parties' ride to Morton-Abbey was baniſhed on their entering the ſaloon, where their ears were ſaluted with the cheerful tabor and merry pipe; "ſweet ſounded the harp in the hall of Morven." A great number of motley characters were already aſſembled. When they had made a circuit of the different apartments which now began to fill faſt, and had paid

paid their compliments to the lady of the manſion, who was ſtalking through them, in a white domino without a maſk, Ellinor was quite enchanted with all ſhe ſaw, whoſe ideas, naturally lively, when drawn from a retroſpect of the miſery of her ſituation, appeared inclined to enter with animation into the diverſions of the evening.

The company now poured in, which, in general, conſiſted, like all maſquerades, public or private, of people aſſuming characters they cannot ſupport. Ellinor was ſoon divided from her party, when ſhe was accoſted by a fine figure of a man, in an old Engliſh dreſs, who whiſpered, "I know you; it is impoſſible to be miſtaken in that nymph-like form; but why aſſume the dreſs of a ſlave, to grace the triumphs of yon proud Sultana, ſeizing her hands; let me tear off theſe ſervile badges; permit one who has long been your captive, to free you from every thing that binds you to the galling yoke

yoke of dependance, whoſe only wiſh is to be united to you in the ſilken cords of love."

A Juſtice Midas, who had overheard the latter part of this ſpeech, ſaid, "What do you talk of love, and all that there; don't you ſee the girl prefers golden chains, and I warrant won't be tempted to make the exchange."

Ellinor directly recognized the little grocer of Cheapſide, whom, laughing, ſhe aſſured was right in his conjectures in general; for thoſe who willingly wore chains took care that their value ſhould make their weight bearable. A Thaleſtris now advanced, ſaying my fair Greek come with me: behind my ſhield you are ſafe from the impertinence of triflers. When ſhe led Ellinor to a ſeat, ſhe ſoon found, by her converſation, that her companion was Lady John Dareall, who expreſſed her ſurpriſe at her having refuſed Sir Harry. Ellinor made what excuſes ſhe could, without entering into her real ſtory. After having heard her to an end, the Amazonian

zonian Queen replied, " all theſe high flown flights are, I ſuppoſe, in the imagination of novel reading Miſſes, very charming, and perfectly in character; but I cannot help feeling mortified at my diſappointment; for I thought you a girl of ſenſe and ſpirit, who would have ſeen, in a proper point of view, Harry's offer, and have accepted him to pleaſe your friends, plague your enemies, and ſhake off the yoke of dependance, that muſt be truly irkſome from ſo contracted a mind as her *litttle ladyſhip's*, who only treats you tolerably, through the exertions of her huſband."

" Now, my fair Greek, I am ſorry to inform you, his interference, though *I* am convinced it proceeds from the beſt of motives, has given the Argus eyes, and everlaſting tongues of all the ugly ſpinſters in the county employment, and ultimately will oblige you to ſeek ſome *other protection*; and what will be the reſult? only changing your taſkmaſters, and dragging a lengthened chain; for with your *agrémens*, who will retain you long in their family, whoſe huſbands

huſbands, ſons, or brothers, have eyes to appreciate beauty."

Ellinor's ſenſations gave teſtimony to the truth of theſe remarks, as the ſilent tears dropped from under her maſk upon her white hands; which, on Lady John's obſerving, ſhe cried, "Come, a truce to ſorrow in ſuch a night as this my good girl; I did not mean to diſtreſs you; for I really feel for your ſituation, and ſhould have been glad to have ſeen you under the protection of a good huſband: but you ſentimental chits are ſuch whimperers, your tears are ever ſo near your eyes.

"Excuſe me, Lady John, I have cogent reaſons for refuſing Sir Harry; were I at liberty to acquaint you with them, they would appear equally ſo to you: but my heart feels grateful for your friendly attention; it will ever be retained in my remembrance, however wayward fate diſpoſes of me."

Here

Here Lady John, drawing out her handkerchief, ſaid, "I think even a maſquerade will not prevent the *ennui* that ſeizes me whenever I enter this caſtle of torpidity; if I ſtay five minutes longer with you, I ſhall be very *bad* company; let us join yon feſtive crew,—'let motley be your wear,' and ſnatch the preſent moment;

"If the world be worth your winning,
Think, oh, think it worth enjoying;
See, Honeſt Harry ſits beſide thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee."

On Lady John's repeating this, Ellinor turned round, and beheld a Squire Groom in a ſmart green and white ſtriped ſatin jacket and a jockey cap, who, in doleful mood, was twiſting the laſh of his whip round his arm, and had evidently overheard their diſcourſe; when Ellinor, riſing, ſaid, "is this well done, Lady John?" who laughingly replied, "Why, child, I promiſed to make one effort for this poor willow-hunting ſwain, who, having flattered himſelf that he had the

view

view hollow, was in deſpair at being thrown out, and who, I ſuppoſe, impatience to know his fate has brought hither; but I give you my word, I did not ſee him till the moment I took leave to tranſpoſe Dryden's lines in his favour.—Say, Knight of the woeful countenance, what have you heard?"

"Enough, my dear Lady John, to convince me that I have run the wrong ſide of the poſt, and that the race will not be won by me: but I beg to aſſure Miſs Harcourt, that ſhe ſhall be no more diſtreſſed by my love; I will in future be content with her friendſhip."

"As a friend," replied Ellinor, "I muſt ever look on Sir Harry Hurry, who is entitled to my utmoſt gratitude for his preference, and diſintereſted offers; but we are obſerved, let us join the dancers."

She was ſoon ſelected by a young Turk, with whom ſhe danced a very graceful minuet, as ſhe did a cotillon with the maſk before mentioned, in an old Engliſh dreſs; who,

who, forgetting himſelf while addreſſing a florid ſpeech to her, expreſſive of his love and deſpair, his hopes and his ſufferings, ſpoke in his own voice, by which ſhe immediately recogniſed Campley, who, from his behaviour and converſation that evening, ſhe thought ſhe had reaſon to fear had not given up the idea of perſecuting her with his addreſſes.

She had been dancing in the gallery, where ſhe did not perceive any of her own party; but, as there were other rooms appropriated to that diverſion, ſhe determined to go in purſuit of them. Every ſpot was now full, even to crowding; it was impoſſible for any company to keep together; by the time they had ſpoke half a dozen words, they were divided by the different characters, each in their turn eager to diſplay their mental or bodily powers.

Ellinor was followed and plagued by ſo many, that what at firſt was amuſing, now tired and diſguſted her, and ſhe made an effort

effort to join Sir James and Lady Lavington, who ſhe ſuppoſed were in the lower rooms.

Finding herſelf left alone by the idlers that had annoyed her, who were flocking round a clown-eating macaroni, when about to depart, ſhe was addreſſed by a black domino, whom ſhe had not before noticed; he offered her his aſſiſtance to hand her down ſtairs, when, in ſqueaking tones, and the uſual maſquerade cant, he told her that he knew her, and whom ſhe was ſeeking; that he had juſt ſeen Sir James and the ladies go into the garden, the heat of the rooms being inſufferable; that if ſhe would permit him that honour, he would conduct her to them.

Ellinor thcught there could be no impropriety in accepting his attendance, when the gardens were nearly as full of company as the rooms, and in a perfect blaze of light. He contrived as they walked to amuſe her with witty remarks on the various characters that had

had been aſſumed for that night *only*, till ſhe found herſelf in a ſmall octagon ſummer-houſe, ſituated in a wood, on the left hand of the park, that was lighted up by lamps like all the other ornamental buildings; but, from its ſecluded ſituation and diſtance from the ſcene of feſtivity, was as deſerted and ſilent as if placed a hundred miles from the ſeat of fun and frolic.

As ſoon as Ellinor was handed in by her companion, and found herſelf alone with a ſtranger, ſhe reflected how far ſhe was from the abbey, that he had impoſed upon her to get her from her friends, inſtead of conducting her to them; alarmed for what inſults ſhe might receive from a man who, though it was evident he knew her, ſhe did not know, as he ſpoke in a feigned voice. Now truly frightened, ſhe made a deſperate effort to force her hand from him, and to make the beſt of her way back; but, aware of her intention, he haſtily locked the door, ſaying, "No, charming Ellinor, I have not

ſo

ſo long ſought, and ſo ardently deſired the preſent moment to let you eſcape me:" then ſnatching her in his arms, he forced her to ſit down, and placed himſelf by her ſide.

Petrified with horror and aſtoniſhment, her uſual preſence of mind forſook her; ſhe burſt into a violent fit of tears; on which he ſaid, in his own voice, "away with thoſe weak and womaniſh devices to which the high ſpirited high-ſouled Ellinor ſhould ſcorn to ſtoop. Come, my fair enſlaver, 'let the god of love wanton in thy eyes, and revel in thy heart,' as he does at this triumphant moment in that of thy devoted Campley. Ah! feel (preſſing the hand he ſtill held to his breaſt), how the palpitating flutterer trembles in the preſence of its lovely arbitreſs."

No ſooner did Campley announce himſelf, than all the libertiniſm of his character, deſcribed by Howard to put her on her guard, ruſhed on her affrighted fancy; ſhe was convinced, that he had *maſqued* his intentions

ſo

ſo long to get her in his power for the baſeſt of purpoſes; that ſhe muſt now oppoſe art to art to avoid the horrors that threatened her from a man that, to gratify his paſſions, would break through all the ties that bind ſociety.

She ſaid, "Unhand me, Colonel Campley, or, unprotected as you think I am, and on which you found your ſecurity for inſulting me, be aſſured you will repent your preſent temerity. To attempt ſoftening ſuch a heart as yours, by deſcribing the miſeries your deteſtable conduct muſt ſubject me to ſuffer, would be a loſs of thoſe moments, to me ſo precious; for, with a head to form plots, at which humanity ſhudders, you have a breaſt of adamant to execute every purpoſe of your vitiated imagination."

"As you brave my power, lady, and already execrate my character, you cannot wonder that I uſe the one, or attempt not the juſtification of the other; having no hopes to be favoured by your good opinion, you drive me to extremities, and muſt take

the conſequence. I brought you to this place to hear the avowal of a flame that conſumes me; to make you the moſt generous offers; to throw myſelf on your mercy; to receive your favours as a *gift*: but, if ſtung by your reproaches,—goaded on to frenzy by your ſcorn, you rouſe me to an act of deſperation, you have alone yourſelf to blame. You have taught me what I ought to do; like you, I feel the *preſent* moments precious, and will avail myſelf of them, to 'ſnatch a joy beyond the reach of fate.' This ſolitude, your angelic charms, my love, driven to deſpair by your ſcorn,—all, all impel me on; this inſtant you muſt, you ſhall be mine."

He had taken off his maſk when he firſt declared himſelf. Ellinor ſaw his face enflamed, his eyes flaſhing fire, his hands that held her trembling with paſſions that threatened her *ruin*: ſhe ſaw all her danger; it rouſed her to exertion. To have allowed herſelf to *faint* in ſuch a ſituation, would have

have thrown her totally in his power; ſhe therefore took her reſolution while he was addreſſing her.

At the concluſion of his ſpeech, he folded both his arms round her waiſt, which left her hands at liberty; quick as thought ſhe faſtened them in the collar of his ſhirt; by which artifice ſhe kept him at her arms length: while he covered them with burning kiſſes. Perceiving the danger of this ſituation, deſperation gave her courage. Exerting all her ſtrength, ſhe griped his throat ſo hard, that he ſaid, "deareſt Ellinor, you will ſtrangle me; take your hands away, and I will leave you;" but ſhe, conſcious of her advantage, determined to keep it; ſaid, "I will never quit my hold, if your death and mine are the conſequences, till you unlock the door."

She now ſaw his eyes glare, and his face turn of a livid colour: frightened at the ſtate to which ſhe had reduced him; and

judging that he would have little inclination to renew his gallant attacks, ſhe let him go, when he dropped immediately on the floor, in all appearance to riſe no more. Shocked to think ſhe had been his murderer, ſhe looked round with horrour: humanity induced her to exert herſelf to ſave the man that a few moments ſince intended her the greateſt injury; now ſhe thought herſelf ſafe from further inſult, ſhe trembled to think ſhe had ſent him to his account with all his ſins upon his head.

This was not a moment to be given to thought, but to action; ſhe attempted to raiſe him againſt a ſeat; ſhe tore the dreſs from his neck; ſhe rubbed his temples with eau-de-luce; ſhe held the bottle to his noſe; and, by continuing this proceſs, in about ten minutes ſhe had the pleaſure of ſeeing returning life reviſit his face. Some time now elapſed before he could ſpeak; when, after looking round him, and heaving ſome deep drawn ſighs, he ſaid, "Where am I?—what has

has been the matter with me?" When his eyes met Ellinor's, after a pauſe, he exclaimed—"I now recollect it all; I thought I was dying by your hands; and is it to your kindneſs I owe my reſtoration? charming woman, any one but yourſelf would have left me to my merited fate; from you I deſerved it. But black as muſt appear my conduct, allow me to exonerate myſelf from having brought you to this place with an *intention* of offering perſonal inſult. It was to have an opportunity to plead my paſſion; to offer you all that I have *now* left in my power; to ſhare that fortune with *you*, to obtain which I have ſold myſelf to uglineſs, vulgarity, and meanneſs.

"I will take you immediately abroad, and, by my attention and tenderneſs, make you forget the ſneers of envy, and the frowns of fortune. I allow that I have been gay and diſſipated: you ſhall make a proſelyte of me to your own opinions; as you have ſaved my body, continue your kindneſs to my better part; be my guide, my monitreſs, and my *friend*."

"*Never*, Sir, we meet no more; evil was that hour in which I firſt beheld you; you are my averſion; duplicity has marked your conduct through life; not one duty that you have not outraged: by your vile behaviour, the truſting huſband has ſuffered the moſt cruel tortures: the deceived wife, ruined daughter, and the diſtracted parent, have been eternally the victims of your baſe deceptions. You have never been ſtopped by one pang of remorſe in your ſelfiſh gratifications; to aid your pleaſures, ſatiate your vicious propenſities, you have trampled on the laws, deſpiſed truth, and bid defiance to honour. At this moment are you not acting the part of an inſidious gueſt, a bad huſband, and a falſe friend? Did you not, by a moſt unmanly conduct, by falſehoods that ſhunned the light, impoſe on the elder Mr. Howard? and, by an anonymous letter, acquaint him that his nephew was going to marry me, though ſuch an idea was alone generated in your fertile imagination. Of this you may reſt aſſured, that Henry Howard is convinced of

of your duplicity; and if ever he returns to England, from whence you have been the occaſion of his baniſhment, he will call upon you for an explanation of ſo nefarious a tranſaction.

Campley was ſtruck dumb by conſcious guilt; and frightened at her ſpirited exertions to ſave herſelf, to which he was ſo nigh falling a ſacrifice; aſtoniſhed at the courage and energy with which ſhe had deſcribed his character, that had alſo enabled her to repel both perſuaſion and force. Ellinor now unlocked the door, and was meditating an eſcape, before the renovated powers of her antagoniſt ſhould again prevent her, when, on turning the key, a party of maſks ruſhed in, among whom, in her conſternation and ſurpriſe, ſhe diſtinguiſhed the Amazon, the New-market Jockey, Proſpero, Miranda, the Quaker, the Sultana, Juſtice Midas, and a maſk in the character of Sterne's Maria, dreſſed in *pink crape*, ſpotted with ſilver, and hair, meant to have the appearance of elegant

diſorder, plaſtered with pomatum, loaded with Marechale powder, and leading by a pink ribbon, a tame lamb of Emma Oſwald's. There were many more of the motley group that crowded round the outſide of the ſummer-houſe, whom it was not ſufficiently large to receive. On the entrance of theſe unexpected viſitors our poor heroine gave herſelf up for *loſt*, conſcious that appearances were ſo much againſt her, that her enemies would avail themſelves of finding her in a ſituation that ſhe was convinced muſt *ſtagger* the belief of her firmeſt friends, and warmeſt advocates.

The party gazed alternately on Ellinor, and the creſt-fallen Campley; the former had not time to tie on her maſk, but the efforts ſhe had made to free herſelf from the latter had deſtroyed all the order and economy of her fanciful dreſs. The zone that faſtened the waiſt had been unclaſped by the violent uſe ſhe made of her arms; it now hung from her wriſts by its dependant chain; her muſlin robe,

robe, in the ſtruggle to regain her liberty, had been trod on, and torn in various directions. Her hair, that had been wound round her head, now fell in long plaits down her back. Her whole appearance muſt have ſtruck thoſe that did not come with a determination to believe the *worſt*, that ſhe had been treated with the utmoſt cruelty.

On the floor ſat the gallant Colonel Campley, with his head leaning on the ſeat where Ellinor had placed it; his dreſs torn open at the neck; his maſk lay by him; his black domino had fallen off, and diſcovered the old Engliſh dreſs that he wore the early part of the evening; his eyes ſtill glared, and his face retained a livid hue, not having recovered its uſual coulour ſince the convulſion occaſioned by his temporary ſuffocation.

The firſt perſon in the ſurrounding group that found the power of ſpeech was the re-

preſentative of the ſoul harrowing Maria of the ſuſceptible Sterne, who, tearing off her maſk, diſcovered the enraged Mrs. Campley; ſhe attacked the poor captive Greek, in a voice and language that would have been quite in character, had ſhe aſſumed that of a French or Engliſh *Poiſſarde*, inſtead of the gentle maniac.—She called on all the company to bear witneſs of what they beheld, and to judge of the wrongs done her, from the preſent appearances—that, if any friendly ſubterfuge could *now* excuſe a young lady pretending to modeſty, being ſhut up with the huſband of another woman, in a ſummer-houſe half a mile diſtant from the reſt of the company, with their clothes torn to tatters. She continued to beſtow the moſt virulent abuſe, in the moſt ſcurrilous terms, on Ellinor, on whom ſhe appeared deſirous *all* the blame ſhould reſt.

Ellinor, in this dreadful dilemma, did not forget what ſhe owed to herſelf, and that ſhe ought to attempt a juſtification of her preſent

ſent ſituation, though ſhe could not flatter herſelf with a hope of gaining belief. She therefore faithfully recounted the reaſon of her being in the ſummer-houſe; gave the true cauſe of the deranged and ſuſpicious appearances that ſhe was conſcious muſt make againſt her, even with the moſt candid.—She made a ſolemn appeal to Campley, to declare if ſhe had not, without exaggeration, told the truth; when, to her extreme ſurpriſe, he anſwered, "My dear Miſs Harcourt cannot doubt for one moment, that I ſhall moſt cheerfully take all the *odium* on myſelf, if any can be ſuppoſed to attach to a mere maſquerade frolic. In affairs of gallantry, I ever thought the man ſhould bear the blame; and, as you are my accuſer, againſt your aſſertion I cannot think of defending myſelf: therefore I will not plead, but allow judgment to go by default."

With eyes, darting anger and contempt, that would have abaſhed any man, but a

Campley, ſhe replied, " Vile and deſpicable wretch, how my ſoul deſpiſes your ſimulating arts—your mean duplicity; but I feel a power, of which you know nothing, the omnipotence of truth, that, at this moment of ſevere trial, ſupports and encourages me to look forward with hope; to patiently wait the time that will expoſe your vile machinations to their merited puniſhment, when my innocence ſhall be cleared. In the interim, I perceive that I am fated to be the devoted victim of fallacious appearances; though I muſt ever regret the loſs of the good opinion of my friends, I cannot blame their ſeceſſion; for ſo artfully has the web been ſpun, that was to entangle *me*, and miſlead *them*, that *finite* wiſdom could neither forſee nor unravel it: to *infinite* then I truſt my cauſe, by which I ſhall be reſtored to thoſe whoſe friendſhip I now loſe, from falſe appearances."

The ladies now all talked together; to preſerve their own characters for virtue, they thought

thought it neceſſary to ſay Campley was an agreeable libertine, that he was certainly to blame to think of an intrigue before the *honey-moon* was elapſed.

Lady Fanny obſerved, that it was doubtleſs very wrong in the Colonel; yet ſome allowance muſt be made for the arts and temptations thrown in his way, by ſuch a ſpecious ſeducer as Ellinor, whoſe well ſpread lures neither *youthful folly*, nor *wary wiſdom*, could eſcape—looking firſt at Sir Harry, and then at Sir James.

The latter, ſighing deeply, ſaid, taking the ſuffering Ellinor by the hand, "Come, my poor unhappy girl, I ſee, as you have truly obſerved, the hour for the triumph of *truth* is not the preſent; but I am aſſured, as well as you, that it *will* come: I grieve to ſee that your cruel and vindictive enemies have conquered; they have robbed you—cruelly robbed you of reputation; they wiſh to tear you from the boſom of friends who know

know and love your virtues; to throw you on an unfeeling world, where, with nothing to hope, and every thing to fear, when oppreſſed with mental deſperation and bodily want, your enemies expect you will be driven to commit thoſe crimes, of which you now are *only* ſuppoſed to have been guilty; that, by doing ſo, you may give an appearance of juſtice to the conduct of your preſent perſecutors.

"Alas! I fear too many of the houſeleſs children of infamy, pain, and poverty, that daily and nightly outrage decency, and ſhock humanity, would, were their ſad ſtory told, be found to have been originally in your preſent predicament. From miſapprehenſion, or youthful folly, condemned to loſe their good name, through the envy and malice of their *own ſex*, they become an eaſy prey to the temptations of mankind. From your underſtanding I form higher expectations, and eventually foreſee the mortification of your enemies and your conſequent triumph.—Come, let me lead you to the carriage; at my houſe you ſhall ſtill find a home; in me a protector;

protector; and, in my family, friends, who, I am certain, are convinced of your innocence."

"There, Sir James," ſqueaked Lady Lavington, "I muſt beg leave to differ from you; I have too long been impoſed on already, and am informed I have been the laughing ſtock of all my acquaintance; but I do not mean to be either any longer; for though you may ſet your favourite at your table, and compel your wife to paſſive acquieſcence, with ſuch a flagrant outrage to decorum, the ſame ſenſe of my *duty*, (ſhe added, weeping), that induces my compliance with ſuch unjuſt commands, where I alone am concerned, obliges me to inſiſt on her immediately quitting my houſe, as a woman of her abandoned character cannot be a fit companion for my *daughter*. Of the propriety of my determination I leave the preſent company to judge."

Every female character, except Lady John Dareall, agreed with Lady Lavington, on her

her being perfectly juſtified in ſhutting her doors againſt Ellinor; when Lady John, whoſe commanding manners, and energetic force of reaſoning, had never yet failed to ſilence the weak, and convince the fluctuating, thus addreſſed the company:—

"I will candidly allow, that appearances make againſt this poor thing, and that at firſt I was ſtaggered by them; but the ſincerity that ſhone through her ſtory, as ſhe told it, has brought conviction to my heart: I do not pretend to be deeply read in plots or counterplots, I have, through life, had little to do with either, I am therefore not equal to the unravelling the preſent; but humanity bids me take the part of the oppreſſed, at leaſt till doubt terminates in conviction. I think it is the law of this land, that a culprit ſhall always be ſuppoſed innocent till his guilt is proved. I will therefore remove all further altercation on this ſubject, by taking home the cauſe of it to Bramble-Hall."

"Dear

"Dear Lady John," exclaimed Miſs Letitia Liptrap, in tones of extreme agony, "would you commit yourſelf to the world's cenſures, by admitting ſo improper a creature into your houſe?"

"Yes, my fair *veſtal*," anſwered her ladyſhip, laughing, "I will dare do ſuch a deed of deſperation; I think I need not acquaint the preſent company (looking round) that I have, from the time I threw off my frock, ſtood up a champion for the *rights* of *women*; have boldly thrown down my gauntlet to ſupport their equality, immunities, and privileges, mental and corporeal, againſt the incroachments of their maſculine tyrants. If this *then* was the rule of my conduct; if I dared to judge and act for myſelf, at *ſixteen*, allowing no guide but rectitude, no monitor but conſcience; fearleſs of the judgment, careleſs of the opinion of a world, whoſe inhabitants are ninety-nine times out of a hundred the ſlaves of prejudice, the dupes of folly, or the victims of avarice!—

"thinkeſt

thinkeſt thou, my chaſte Letitia, if at that period, when youth ſparkled in my eye, and glowed on my cheek; when envy reared her ſnaky creſt againſt charms, that men profeſſed to worſhip, and women to deſpiſe: if then "I rode in the whirlwind, and defied the ſtorm;" laughed at the anathemas fulminated againſt *me*, and my actions, by diſappointed ſpinſters, neglected wives, and unjointered widows, thinkeſt thou, at *the age of forty*, with a character long ſince decided to pleaſe myſelf, I am to be deterred by a fear of what conſtructions may be put on my motives, by a *world* whoſe opinions I hold ſo cheap; that it ſhould hinder me from ſnatching from undeſerved obloquy (for ſo it appears to me) a young creature, who her own ſex are hunting down in *full cry*."

Then catching Ellinor's hand, ſhe put it under her arm, ſaying, "Come with me, my poor unfortunate; I will protect you from the malice of the women, and the artifices of the men."

"Do

"Do you hear, my gallant Colonel, if you chuſe to offer any further inſults to my *protegée*, I have not the leaſt objection to draw a trigger in her defence, though I cannot quit you without obſerving, that I have but a contemptible opinion of that man's courage, that, aſſaſſin like, ſtabs in the dark; and, becauſe he cannot rob a woman of her honour, makes it not worth preſerving, by deſtroying her reputation. Come, Harry, help me to put Ellinor into my carriage, and I will return with her to Bramble-Hall."

While Lady John was ſpeaking, whom none were inclined to interrupt, Campley employed himſelf in coolly arranging his *dreſs*, not allowing it to appear, though he was keenly mortified at Ellinor's treatment, and vexed at her having found ſo formidable a protectreſs as this modern Thaleſtris, whoſe proweſs he was far from wiſhing to encounter; whoſe wit cut like a two edged ſword. To her addreſs, he bowing, ſarcaſtically replied, "With ſuch an antagoniſt as your ladyſhip, what

what man would feel valiant, who, if he eſcaped death from your hand, muſt inevitably receive it from your eyes. I own my courage not equal to a combat, where I am convinced my opponent will prove victorious. I ſhall therefore beg leave to decline the honour of accepting your challenge."

Lady John, to this hyperbolical ſpeech, deigned not to make a reply, but with a contemptuous ſmile quitted the diſaſtrous ſummer-houſe, nodding ſignificantly to thoſe ſhe left behind, ſaying, " Ladies and gentlemen, like Sir Peter Teazle, we leave our characters with you, and humbly requeſt, in the midſt of *juſtice*, you will remember *mercy*."

CHAP. XV.

BEFORE the trio were out of ſight, thoſe whom fear of Lady John had kept *quiet*, began to exclaim and declaim againſt the abſent with all the rancour of envy, the furor of detraction, and the acrimony of ſlander; robbing her preſent conduct, ſo worthy of admiration, of its genuine merit, by obſerving, that they ſuppoſed ſhe was now acting the pander to the pleaſures of the preſent Sir Harry Hurry, as ſhe was well known to have long ſince contributed to the gratifications of his father.

How

How differently was Lady John employed! in comforting the afflicted: how eſtimable does her conduct appear, when oppoſed to thoſe female harpies, whoſe higheſt happineſs ariſes from the deſtruction of their *own ſex!* The moſt ferocious beaſts of prey, the lion, the tyger, and the wolf, deſtroy not their own ſpecies; it is the reaſoning brute of the creation,—it is man who alone lives, and feels his gratification, in the deſtruction of his *fellow-man*!

After the departure of Ellinor, the company returned to the Abbey, to report what they had witneſſed, and to make ſhrewd *gueſſes* at what they had not; theſe they reported to thoſe who were not ſo fortunate as to be preſent at ſuch a delectable treat to the lovers of ſcandal. Sir James, whoſe good heart was torn with conflicting paſſions, told Lady Lavington and his daughter, that he ſhould return home directly.

"What, before you have ſupped, Sir?" cried Auguſta.

"Yes,

"Yes, and before you have either; therefore prepare to attend me,"

"Surely, Sir James," ſaid her ladyſhip, "you cannot mean to leave Lady Fanny alone?"

"She will find plenty of company here, that will ſuit her taſte better than ours; *that* lady will experience no inconvenience; ſhe can very well take care of herſelf, it is the innocent, not the artful, that want protection. I have no terms to keep with *her*; ſhe has been the occaſion of all the diſagreeable events this evening has produced."

Auguſta now began to weep and intreat to ſtay,—Lady Lavington to bluſter and inſiſt; but neither had any effect upon Sir James, whoſe carriage being announced, he handed the ladies into it; and, juſt as he was about to follow, Lady Fanny came up, with Mrs. Oſwald, who ſaid, "Sure, Sir James, you do not mean to leave us, and take the ladies away at this early hour?"

"Moſt

"Moſt certainly I do, madam; and happy would it have been for all parties, if I had perſiſted in my firſt reſolution, and not permitted them to partake of a diverſion which never had *my* approbation;—where the face is maſked, and the heart thrown open to inſpection;—where impoſition is the quinteſſence of the amuſement, and deception ſtudied as a ſcience by men of twenty, and girls of ſixteen."

"Oh, now you are in for *proſing*, Sir James, I muſt fly," cried Lady Fanny; "but you cannot be ſerious to leave me here alone; for I am poſitively determined to be one of the laſt that departs from this delightful charming ſpot."

"You are to act as you pleaſe, madam; I return to Avon Place directly."

Mrs. Oſwald now told Lady Lavington ſhe would take care of Lady Fanny for the night, and bring her home in the courſe of the next day.

In

In their ride home, Lady Lavington would have remonſtrated on the cruelty of Sir James's behaviour to herſelf and the young ladies; but he inſiſted on her ſaying no more on the ſubject, in a voice of command, that convinced her he would be obeyed.

Auguſta cried and pouted, and each retired to their beds to muſe on the occurrences of the evening; where we will leave them, and return to the motley group at Morton Abbey, whoſe pleaſures ſeemed to be rather increaſed than diminiſhed by the miſadventures of the receding party. *All* now entered into the full ſpirit of maſquerade amuſement, which conſiſts in pert folly and noiſy mirth. The Duke of Southernwood, dreſſed as an old *woman*, appeared quite in *character*; Mr. David Danglecourt, as a Mercury, was officiouſly on the wing to fetch and carry; the Miſs Oſwalds perſonated the three goddeſſes, on mount Ida, without either wit, grace, or beauty to claim

the golden fruit; while their awkward brother, as the ſhepherd, Paris, ran about the rooms offering the gilded apple to every female, but the contending divinities.—In vain his ſiſters told him it was out of character not to beſtow it according to the ſtory; for, were they not repreſenting the judgment of Paris, that was in the picture at the end of the gallery?

"That's my reaſon," replied this *Orſon* of a Paris, "for refuſing, becauſe I cannot find in either of you a *Venus*. I therefore am determined not to have my *judgment* called in queſtion:" then, running up to Lady Fanny, he proclaimed aloud, "this is the goddeſs of my idolatry, to whom I will preſent it." Highly flattered by the compliment, ſhe moſt graciouſly accepted the prize; and, that her triumph might be conſpicuous, placed the envied fruit in her boſom, to the utter diſmay and mortification of the celeſtial repreſentatives. This was the great jeſt of the evening.

Miſs Letitia Liptrap was in the character of Iris, with a rainbow made of various-coloured gauze, extended on wire, and faſtened to each ſide the bottom of her whale-bone petticoat; ſhe appeared like a Dutch toy tumbling through a hoop. There were numerous other characters *equally* ridiculous, as ill imagined, and worſe executed; which, having nothing to do with our hiſtory, we leave to "ſtrut and fret their hour, and then be heard no more."

We muſt now look back to account for the party which was drawn together at the ſummer houſe. A maſk, who had appeared in the habit of a fortune-teller, had occaſioned much ſurpriſe in many of the company, by the knowledge ſhe ſeemed to have of their paſt deeds and future intentions. This *Sybil*, after having made ſome ſimper with pleaſure, and others ſhrink with horror by her powers of preſcience, ſingled out Lady Lavington, whom ſhe found ſeated at a window and alone; ſhe took her hand, and, hav-

ing looked at the lines for ſome time with much attention, ſhook her head, as if in ſorrow; her ladyſhip ſwallowed the bait, and enquired what ſhe ſaw that appeared to excite her wonder?

"That, of which I will inform you, if you have faith enough in my art to avail yourſelf of what I ſhall impart, to avoid evils that threaten you and your's."

"Well, I promiſe," cried her ladyſhip; —proceed; I am eager for a proof of your powers."

"I will ſoon convince you that I am no impoſtor. Firſt, then, you married a man that you knew did not love you, on whom you were forced by his father; of courſe you could not expect an adoring huſband; but it was your fate to meet a polite one, who, loſt to all the joys of life, retired within himſelf for comfort, and left you the unreſtrained miſtreſs of your actions, and his fortune."

Lady

Lady Lavington, ſurpriſed and offended, was going to anſwer, but was ſtopped by her companion.

"Hear me to the end; on the preſent moment hangs your future deſtiny: it is of the utmoſt conſequence to yourſelf to lend me a patient ear. Thus your time paſſed, till within the laſt ten months, when you took a young and beautiful woman into your houſe. Reflect before you anſwer me; did no change take place in your family on her becoming an inmate of it?"

After a pauſe, Lady Lavington replied, "Yes; Sir James, who had long ſhut himſelf up from the world, ſoon after ſhe came, was perſuaded to join our parties at home, and in time to accompany us to public amuſements."

"Did you never attempt to account for ſo great a change in his mind and manners?"

"Yes, I thought that he was grown weary of his books; and, as his daughter was entering

into the great world, that he choſe himſelf to be her conductor."

"You were ſoon ſatisfied, and eaſily impoſed upon; the goodneſs of your *own* heart did not permit you to ſee the deception of one, from whom your truſt and confidence called for gratitude. The more Argus-eyed world was not blind to the artifices practiſed on your credulity; nor was rumour ſilent in ſpreading the tale of your huſband's being in love with your *protegée*. This was long the tea-table converſation of your friends; by ſome you were pitied, by others laughed at; none choſe to talk to you on the ſubject, becauſe there are wives in this faſhionable age, who are conveniently ſhort-ſighted to their huſband's amours. They were not aſſured but you might be of the number, as you alone did not appear to ſee the power this young woman poſſeſſed; the world naturally underſtood it was a matter perfectly ſettled between you."

This

This converſation, ſo artfully contrived to alarm the pride, and rouſe the dormant jealouſy of Lady Lavington, had the deſired effect. Conſciouſneſs of the truth of what the *Sybil* had advanced, flaſhed at once on her mind, aided by a retroſpect of all the humane and friendly attentions of Sir James to Ellinor, and all her innocent and cheerful attempts to pleaſe him, that aroſe alone from the effuſions of a grateful heart, ſenſible of receiving unreturnable obligations; theſe were all conſtrued into an unlawful paſſion in the former, and arts practiſed by the latter to allure him to her purpoſes. Thus may every action of our lives be made to change their colour from *prejudice*.

This *gnome* had no ſooner ſown the ſeeds that ſhe perceived by her art would produce ſorrow and diſcord at Avon Place, than ſhe aroſe, telling Lady Lavington that the fates had permitted her to be made acquainted, through the medium of magical information, with the deceptions practiſed on her unſuſ-

pecting nature; that ſhe had but one method to purſue, which was, to tax Sir James openly with his infidelity, and to inſiſt, that the cauſe of it ſhould immediately quit the family. By this at leaſt ſhe would gain one point, that of not having the daily mortification of ſeeing the preference given to her rival; that, when ſhe was removed, the lady might behave ſo as to diſguſt her paramour, being too much of a coquette to reſerve her favours for him, as ſhe had for ſome time been ſpreading her nets for a young married man not an hundred miles from that ſpot; and my aſtrological knowledge deceives me if ſhe has not ſucceeded.

She now aroſe and mingled with the crowd, and left her ladyſhip to ponder over what ſhe had ſaid, who was at a loſs to determine whether ſhe really was a dealer in futurity, or a friend who, under that diſguiſe, had undertaken to open her eyes on the ills that awaited her. She ſoon argued herſelf into the conviction, that all ſhe had heard

was

was *truth*; and the concluſions ſhe drew were, that ſhe was the moſt abuſed and deceived of wives; therefore ſhe determined to follow the *Sybil's* advice; and the next morning, when the family met at breakfaſt, to proclaim aloud her wrongs, and inſiſt on Ellinor's being diſmiſſed, with the diſgrace her conduct merited.

When our poor perſecuted Ellinor was firſt diſcovered in the ſummer-houſe, with appearances ſo much againſt her, which in ſome degree juſtified what the *Sybil* had recently told Lady Lavington of her ſeeking an amour with Campley, ſhe did not ſcruple to inſiſt on her returning no more to Avon-Place. It remains to account for ſo large a party of thoſe whom Ellinor *called* friends, preſenting themſelves at the ſame time in that ill-fated temple.

The fortune-teller, who was a moſt indefatigable ſpy, teaſed every body, and was in all places, followed Campley when he retired

to his dreſſing-room, waited and ſaw him return in a black domino, which ſhe naturally ſuppoſed was to anſwer ſome purpoſe that might aid her deſigns; therefore ſhe never loſt ſight of him till he joined Ellinor; though ſhe heard what he ſaid, and the offer he made of conducting her to her friends, from which ſhe was conſcious he was uſing deception, as ſhe knew they were not in the garden, it gave no compunction to this diabolical agent of miſchief: ſo far from aiding to ſnatch this young creature from the pit ſhe perceived dug for her; ſhe beheld with a malignant joy, ſuch as fiends are ſaid to experience, when their helliſh plots ſuceed, that Campley's arts, and Ellinor's being ſacrificed to them, would aſſiſt, if not *finiſh*, the vile buſineſs ſhe came that night to execute, which was the total deſtruction of this young unfortunate, by making her appear an unprincipled wanton, whoſe vices were the more dangerous, becauſe ſhe was ſo complete a miſtreſs of deception, and her faſcinations were ſo powerful,

powerful, that in her, vice aſſumed the appearance of virtue.

She followed at a diſtance; ſaw Campley lead the unſuſpecting Ellinor into the ſummer-houſe; ſhe even heard him *lock* the door, and then returned to the ſaloon, where, after ſome time had elapſed, ſhe whiſpered thoſe ſhe choſe to ſelect as her companions to witneſs the diſgrace of Ellinor, that her knowledge of the planets informed her, that Mars and Venus were at that moment in the ſame degree of the zodiac;—that if they would follow her, they ſhould be treated with a view of thoſe conſtellations, without the aid of Herſchall's teleſcope; that ſhe would ſoon convince them of the extent of her knowledge in the occult ſcience.

Lady Lavington, who thought Ellinor was concerned, moved the firſt; Lady Fanny took the arm of Auguſta, ſaying ſhe was always fond of ſtar-gazing; Sir James followed to take care of them. The *Sybil*

whiſpered Mrs. Campley, "You muſt not miſs a ſight that will give you ſo much *pleaſure*."

This converſation did not paſs unheard by the crowd; many followed, in hopes to enjoy ſome fun.

The conſequence of this viſit has been already delineated. No ſooner had Lady John Dareall, like a guardian *ſylph*, taken Ellinor under her protection, than the wicked *gnome*, that had done all the miſchief, ſtole away unobſerved in the buſtle; nor did any perſon know who ſhe was, from whence ſhe came, or where ſhe vaniſhed, though it was evident ſhe knew every body, notwithſtanding their diſguiſes; nor, as we have ſeen, were their moſt private tranſactions unknown to her. That ſhe came to do Ellinor all the evil in her power, was evident; the credulous began to believe her in reality a ſupernatural agent; but who ſhe actually was, time muſt *develope*.

Lady John would not permit Sir Harry to accompany them home, but bid him return, and fight the cauſe of the abſent; for ſhe added, laughing, "I know I ſhall not be ſpared for having robbed theſe human ſharks of their prey."

As they were returning to Bramble Hall, the poor unfortunate Ellinor, whom the kindneſs of Lady John had melted into tears, and whoſe heart throbbed with ſenſations of gratitude too big for utterance, would have thrown herſelf on her knees to thank her; but ſhe forcibly held her on the ſeat, ſaying, "My good girl, add not to your diſtreſs, by conſidering my behaviour in the light of an obligation. You owe me *none*; with my ideas of doing what my heart tells me is right, in deſpite of the ſarcaſms of prudential reaſoners, I could not ſee a young woman hurled at once from all her proud proſpects; driven with ignominy from the boſom of her protectors; expoſed to the jealous fury of an enraged wife, the taunting inſults of inſignificant

nificant girls, and the outrageous virtue of mouldy ſpinſters; for to have ſeen her without reputation, friends, or fortune, thrown upon an unfeeling world, would have been acting againſt the principles I *profeſs*.

"Had you been really guilty, as on a firſt view you appeared to be, I think I ſhould have acted juſt as I have now done, by ſnatching you from the wolves of your own *ſex*, who were ready to tear you to pieces. As a frail mortal myſelf, I commiſerate the infirmities of my ſex, who, with ſuſceptible hearts, and minds enervated by an education calculated to debilitate both the corporeal and mental ſyſtem, they look not into themſelves for ſupport, but *lean* on man, whoſe vaunted ſtrength ariſes from their weakneſs. Did we make greater exertions, and call into action thoſe powers entruſted to us by the Creator of the univerſe, we ſhould find that he has diſtributed his gifts nearly equal between the ſexes. There are very few arts or ſciences that women are not capable of acquiring,

were

were they educated with the ſame advantages as men."

Lady John had now mounted her *favourite* hobby-horſe, and cantered on briſkly.

"My dear Ellinor, it is ſo evidently the intereſt of theſe ſelf-created lords of the univerſe, to maintain their uſurped authority, which is only to be done by pretending to admire in women thoſe qualities for which they ought to feel contempt; ignorant imbecility, which they ſoften down under the denomination of feminine delicacy; that is, to tremble at a breeze, weep over a novel, and faint with ecſtacy at the unnatural notes of an opera ſinger; whoſe mind is too debilitated to enter into an argument with her huſband, by which ſhe acquires the character of the milder virtues, becauſe ſhe prefers the joys of laſſitude to any triumph that might be gained by exertion."

"The *fruit* of ſuch a marriage," continued Lady John, "muſt reſemble the tree from whence it ſprung; the huſband takes upon himſelf

himſelf the education of the boys, who, by being ſent to a public ſchool, where, by practiſing manly exerciſes, and the example of others, they gain courage; the girls are left to the management of their indolent ignorant mother, who cannot act but from what ſhe knows; of courſe they are trained up to be like her. They are immured in the nurſery, with their dolls and their toys, rarely feeling the uſe of their legs, but in their perambulations round their priſon-room;—for, if the wind is in the ſouth it is too cloſe; if in the north, it is too cold for them to encounter. Fogs are unwholeſome; the ſun in ſpring and autumn is aguiſh; in ſummer it will ſpoil their complexions. There is ſo ſmall a portion of times or ſeaſons, when their lady-mother can permit them to walk, fearing the winds of Heaven ſhould "viſit their faces too roughly;" that roſy health can never mantle on their pallid cheeks: but then they take the *air* three days out of ſeven in the family coach, with the windows drawn up.

Can

Can it be expected, from ſuch enervating management, that the body can be otherwiſe than weak and ſickly? and the mind is too intimately connected with it, not to partake of a debility, that modern education is not calculated to ſtrengthen, which conſiſts in placing a Frenchwoman to preſide over them, and to teach them her language, before they have an idea of their own: they are taught to dance before they can walk, and to ſing before they can ſpeak. Their weak bodies, and crude minds, are oppreſſed with too *many* avocations, to be able properly to digeſt *any*; for the head, like the ſtomach, ſhould not be overloaded, or you defeat the exertions of the former, and deſtroy the health of the latter.

By this plan parents counteract their own purpoſes; for it is calculated to depreſs the vivid principle which gives elaſticity to animal nature. Too much attention to ſtudy renders the mental powers torpid; oppreſſes the imagination; precludes exertion, and bewilders itſelf in the mazes of doubt and perplexity. That girls ſo educated

cated ſhould receive more than a ſmattering of what is attempted to be taught them is morally impoſſible; nor does the faſhionable mother care; convinced that a reputation for brilliant talents gained her a huſband, ſhe truſts to its doing the ſame for her daughters; who, when they are firſt preſented to the world, boldly exhibit their accompliſhments, having been perſuaded they have reached the *acme* of perfection by their maſters, whoſe intereſt it was to blazon their pupils progreſs in their different departments, to gain themſelves reputation, by aſſerting they were the moſt graceful dancers, and poſſeſſed the moſt refined taſte for muſic, drawing, and painting, of any *amateurs* of the age.

The world would rather yield implicit belief, than diſpute their ſuperlatives. Thus they gain credit for endowments, of which they poſſeſs only the ſhadow. Let us examine what are their real acquirements; they are to totter a minuet, rattle the keys of a piano forte, twang the ſtrings of a harp, ſcream

ſcream an Italian ſong, daub a work-baſket, or make a fillagree tea-caddie; they are juſt able to decypher a letter of intrigue, and ſcrawl an anſwer; have French enough to enable them to read by the help of a dictionary, *La Nouvelle Heloiſe*, *les Liaiſons Dangereuſes*, *Les Malheurs de l'Inconſtance*, and the *Chevalier Faublas*. Of the authors of their own country, of its hiſtory, ancient and modern, of its laws or policy, they know as little as a native of Kamtſchatka. When men marry ſuch women, where is the wonder, that, after their perſons grow familiar, precluded by their ignorance from becoming rational companions of men of ſenſe, the treat them with cold neglect? which at laſt terminates in total diſguſt.

"Thus, my dear Ellinor, what the preſent age gains in poliſh is loſt in underſtanding. I grieve to think what a degenerate race the females of the ſucceeding generation will exhibit."

The

The coach now ſat them down at Bramble-Hall, and Betty Bloſſom, her Ladyſhip's attendant, was ordered to bid the houſekeeper put Miſs Harcourt into a well-aired bed; when Lady John ſaid, "my dear girl, I wiſh you the repoſe of the *morning*; try to forget, in the arms of Morpheus, laſt nights' tranſactions, and to-morrow at breakfaſt we will talk them over."

Ellinor followed her cherry-cheeked conductor. As ſoon as ſhe was in bed, ſhe began to take a retroſpect of the recent events that appeared to be bringing all her troubles to a *climax*. Supported by conſcious innocence, her ſpirits were buoyed up, and her nerves braced to oppoſe truth to falſehood; ſhe determined not to be wanting to herſelf in this moment of trial, nor allow her enemies to triumph in the ſucceſs of their machinations.

She reflected, with pleaſure and gratitude, that ſhe had been ſnatched by Lady John

John from impending ruin, from whoſe general character ſhe could have formed no ſuch expectations. She flattered herſelf ſhe ſhould be able, by recounting her ſtory, which ſhe determined immediately to do, to convince her how unjuſtly ſhe was accuſed, and that ſhe was not unworthy the protection ſhe had ſo humanely afforded her."

She now offered up her thanks to the Omnipotent, who had raiſed her ſuch a friend in the hour of affliction, on whoſe ſupport alone could ſuch an iſolated being depend.

At nine o'clock Betty Bloſſom knocked at her door. On being deſired to enter, ſhe ſaid, " Miſs, my lady ſays ſhe be very ſorry; ſhe have gotten no clothes that will fit you; but if you will pleaſe for to deſcend for to wear my beſt glazed calicoe gown, and pink petticoat, they be much at your ſervice."

Ellinor, thanking her for the offer, accepted it, and deſired ſhe would add to it one

one of her muſlin caps. Betty, quite proud that ſo fine a lady would wear her habiliments, ſoon returned, and aſſiſted Ellinor to put them on; and, having confined her hair under Betty's round cap, who had added to it her pink top knot: in this, with a chintz-patterned gown, and a muſlin apron and handkerchief, Ellinor looked beautiful.

Betty, viewing her own attire receiving conſequence from the natural graces of the wearer, cried, "Well, Miſs, for ſartain ſure you muſt be main pretty, to look ſo well in a poor ſarvant's clothes. I never liked that there gown before; but I ſhall walue it now for the ſake of the wearer. Lord, I wonders if my lady will know you; I wiſhes John Butler may miſtake you for me."

"Does that wiſh come from your heart, Betty?"

"Oh, dear Miſs, yes; becauſe we ſhould ſo laugh at im about it in ſarvants-all."

Ellinor

Ellinor now deſcended to the breakfaſt-room, where ſhe found Lady John making inroads on a cold *ſirloin*; who, as ſhe entered, ſitting on one ſide of the table, and only getting a glance at her gown, ſaid, "Bloſſom, what, inſtead of attending Miſs Harcourt, you have been dizening yourſelf out in your beſt attire; go, and let her know breakfaſt is ready."

"I did receive your ladyſhip's meſſage, and haſtened to attend your ſummons, as ſoon as I could adjuſt my borrowed robes," anſwered her fair gueſt.

Lady John now turned round, and laying down her knife and fork, enjoyed a hearty fit of laughing at her miſtake, vowing Ellinor looked handſomer in Bloſſom's clothes than her own, and concluded by wiſhing Harry could ſee her before ſhe changed them, as he then would be ten times more in love with her than ever.

"Does not that wiſh ſound ill from the mouth of the good natured Lady John, where her adopted ſon is concerned?"

"As

"As you have ſo much feeling for this adopted ſon of mine, why did you refuſe him, when you are well aſſured that your acceptance of his offers would make his heart ſing with joy? But I forgot, you are my gueſt, and muſt not be urged upon any ſubject that is diſagreeable."

"What do you mean to do in reſpect to the Lavingtons? Will you ſend for your clothes, or wait to ſee, if, in the courſe of the day, they arrive? I think they will come, they having no excuſe for detaining them, as you have ſtole nothing but *hearts*, which I believe is not puniſhable by ſtatute law."

Ellinor clearly ſaw, that to be a favourite with Lady John, ſhe muſt try to bear her misfortunes with ſtoic philoſophy, and aſſume the appearance of cheerfulneſs; or, to uſe one of her own axioms, "not pray to Jupiter to help the waggon out of the ſlough, but clap her ſhoulders to the wheel:" therefore, ſmiling at Lady John's well-meant raillery, ſhe told her, whatever might be the nature of the high crimes and miſdemeanors ſhe

ſtood

ſtood charged with, ſhe would much rather truſt her cauſe to the equitable laws of her country, and the unprejudiced deciſion of twelve honeſt jurymen, than, as was moſt likely happen, to be tried, condemned, and executed by her *peers*.

"Bravo, Ellinor, I admire your wit, and honour your ſpirit; I love an animated girl; had you cried andwhimpered, I ſhould have pitied your misfortunes, and deſpiſed your puſillanimity.—Here's my hand; innocent or guilty, I giveyou my honour you ſhall not be cruſhed by the *preſent* conſpiracy."

Ellinor read the varying paſſions of this eccentric woman's ſoul, as they beamed in her fine eyes, who hid, under a rough and rigid exterior, a heart glowing with all the virtues of humanity, and a hand ever open to melting charity. The houſeleſs child of poverty, never went unrelieved from her gate; and it has been ſhewn, that ſhe dared to ſnatch from obloquy what the world ſtigmatized as a frail fair one, and to ſhield her from the deſtruction to which ſhe was con-

ſigned by her own *ſex!* Noble-minded woman, were there more like you, happy would it be for many an unfortunate young creature, who, from importunity, opportunity, and the various ſeductive artifices practiſed by mankind, have fallen early victims to their deceptions. Fain would *ſuch* return within the pale of propriety: if their contrition and penitence were properly encouraged, they might make worthy members of ſociety; but calumniated by the world, ſhunned by their former friends, reprobated by their parents, avoided by all who *call* themſelves virtuous, the poor victim becomes *deſperate*; neceſſity throws her into the power of her undoer, till poſſeſſion begets ſatiety, which brings on *complaints* on her part, and *diſguſt* on his; he *leaves*, and the town *receives* her;

"She falls like ſtars that ſet to riſe no more."

Few, *very few*, but in the early ſtages of vice, might be ſaved, did they meet a Lady John Dareall to protect, ſupport, and encourage their return to virtue.

CHAP. XVI.

ELLINOR now entreated Lady John to be permitted to make her the *confidante* of her real ſtory, which ſhe took up from her earlieſt remembrance; ſpoke of her meeting with Howard; of his introduction at Sir James Lavington's, by Campley; of the Colonel's inſolent offer before ſhe left London; recounted his hiſtory, as related by Howard to put her upon her guard againſt his artifices; of that gentleman's reaſons for ſuppoſing, that he owed to Campley his uncle's taking him from England, by his anonymous information; that he intended

to marry her; but, as Campley was now a huſband, and behaved ſo proper ſince his arrival at Morton Abbey, till the laſt evening, that ſhe flattered herſelf he had totally given over perſecuting her; ſhe therefore more eaſily fell into the ſnare laid for her, particularly as ſhe had recollected his voice, under the maſk of an old Engliſh character, ſhe had not the leaſt ſuſpicion that he was the black domino. She then related with more method the whole of his conduct from the time they entered the ſummer-houſe, till Lady John's appearance there.

"Truth ſpeaks with moſt miraculous organs;" from the mouth of a genuine child of nature, it brought the conviction to Lady John, that Ellinor had been cruelly uſed; that Campley was a villain; and that ſhe was perfectly innocent of the charges laid againſt her.

At this moment, Sir James Lavington ſent up his name, deſiring to be permitted to

ſay a few words to Miſs Harcourt, in the preſence of Lady John, who ordered the ſervant to ſhew him up.

"Does not your Ladyſhip think it improper, after the accuſation brought againſt me laſt night by Lady Lavington, that I ſhould ever again ſee Sir James?"

"Not at all, child; it will be quite correct to ſee him in my company, and hear what he has to ſay. You allow he has always acted like a father by you; why ſhould you puniſh *him* for the faults of his four-crout of a wife, who has ſaid the *worſt* ſhe can of *you*, —ſo you may now bid her defiance."

Sir James entered, with a countenance, in which tender ſorrow and keen vexation ſtrove for preeminence. He ſtarted at the ſight of Ellinor.—"What, Sir James, do you not recogniſe your elegant Ellinor in my blooming handmaid? you ſee that we, as well as our neighbours, have the ſpirit of metamorphoſe in us; beſides, ſhe waits

Lady Lavington's permiſſion to reaſſume her own *character*, or at leaſt to appear in her own *clothes*."

"I came, my good Lady John, to return you my thanks for your kindneſs and protection of this ineſtimable and much injured young woman, whom I would pledge my life, in deſpite of the appearances againſt her, is innocent."

"I muſt interrupt you, Sir James, to ſay of that I am perfectly convinced; and you would oblige me by not being too laviſh in your praiſe for acting a part, that I had in reality been as great a brute if I had not performed, as I know it is the faſhion to call me. As we both think alike in reſpect to the gallant colonel, it is time loſt to talk of *him*. But there is one thing ſtaggers me; how came Lady Lavington to bring her charge againſt Ellinor? and who was the accuſer that ſpirited up her ladyſhip at that eventful moment? The plot was deeply *laid*, and the *denouement* meant to be a maſter ſtroke."

"A

"A very ſerious altercation (replied Sir James), has taken place this morning between Lady Lavington and myſelf; in which I inſiſted that ſhe ſhould give up her author; for I acknowledge my ſuſpicions fell on Lady Fanny Flutter; but at preſent I fear I ſhall be unable to trace the ſcandal to its ſource."

He now repeated Lady Lavington's adventure with the fortune-teller; they both remembered to have ſeen her; and that after conducting the party to the ſummer-houſe, ſhe diſappeared; expecting, no doubt, ſhe ſhould be called on to anſwer for the effects produced by her miſchievous manœverings. In vain they gueſſed who this could be, that was ſo much Ellinor's enemy, and was ſo well acquainted with the actions of all the parties concerned, as to be enabled to draw with ſuch art and contrivance all her rays of malice to one focus. Both Lady John and Sir James thought time alone could unravel the myſtery; neither had any doubt that it was ſome emiſſary of Lady Fanny's, and they

ſhould have ſuppoſed of Campley's alſo; only the expoſing him to the fury of his wife and her relations, was certainly not in her *brief*.

Sir James now addreſſed Ellinor:—"You muſt permit me, Miſs Harcourt, to make you ſome ſmall amends for your ſufferings on my account: the only thing that can make me endure life, is the being able to render yours comfortable. I muſt therefore entreat you to accept of two hundred pounds a year, not as a gift, but as an expiation, of the unintentional injury you have received through me; that ſum I will pay into the hands of Lady John, during my life, and at my death, you will find it ſettled upon you; this, with your modeſt expectations, will enable you to live independant of your own exertions; which, as a young, beautiful, and accompliſhed woman, you have bitterly experienced, can never be made with any hopes of ſucceſs. I offer you this, which is much leſs than I wiſhed

wiſhed to preſent you, becauſe I would not alarm your prudence, and expoſe myſelf to the mortification of a refuſal. It will never be known, as you ſhall always receive it through the medium of your excellent friend Lady John.

" Do not, Miſs Harcourt, refuſe this trifle; your acceptance of it can alone reconcile me to drag on a hated exiſtence for the few years that may yet be allotted me. I bluſh not to own, that my life has, for the greater part of it, been a burthen to its poſſeſſor. Of the inhabitants of the world I have long been tired; from my domeſtic comfor s I eceived no gratification; my life was a *blank*, till you, my lovely girl, became a part of my family. Your ſuavity of manners, cheerful ſpirits, animated wit, and elegant talents, ever exerted to give pleaſure; your grateful, ſympathizing, friendly attention, it was impoſſible not to feel and be charmed with. To you was given a faſcinating power to take off the ſpell of morbid melancholy, rouſe inanity from its ſtupor,

exhilarate the depreſſed. I felt and acknowledged the potency of your various capabilities of pleaſing; it reſtored me to the intercourſe of ſocial life. I awoke as from a long and depreſſing dream; I once more entered the world, from which I had for many years eſtranged myſelf; I mixed with its inhabitants, and enjoyed its amuſements. This miracle was performed by you, fair Iphigene: to *you* my family and friends are indebted for my reſtoration to them. How have they rewarded you, for what they ſo long wiſhed, and ſo eagerly ſought? by robbing you of your reputation, through the medium of that *very man*, who, if his pleaſure or happineſs was dear to them, they ought to have heaped on you careſſes, and loaded you with obligations, to ſhew their gratitude.

"After having ſaid ſo much of that power, my amiable girl, which I have acknowledged you had over my actions, I think it right ſolemnly to aver, before Lady John, that my partiality did not at all partake of the nature

that

that the ſcandalous part of my acquaintance have been pleaſed to annex to it. The affection I felt for you, was that of a fond father, or brother, gratified by beholding the beauty of perſon and mind, of a beloved daughter, or ſiſter, whoſe numerous perfections bound cloſer to his heart the chain of conſanguinity. Such were the ſenſations I experienced for you, that changed my ſorrows into peace, and gave renovated life to a debilitated body and a diſtreſſed mind."

Sir James pauſed, and Ellinor replied;—"By your praiſe, Sir James, I am truly gratified; your approbation of my conduct, gives me conſequence with myſelf, and will, I truſt exonerate me from intentional evil, in the judgment of the candid: that I may continue to merit both your's and the world's good opinion, I muſt, in this trying moment, act as my own conſciouſneſs of rectitude dictates, and with a propriety of behaviour which will juſtify my few remaining friends in adhering to my cauſe. This motive,

and not pride or pique, obliges me to decline accepting your offer; if any thing could add to the reſpect and veneration I ever have felt for Sir James Lavington, it would be at this moment, when, without hearing my account of the deteſtable Campley's deep-laid plots, to rob me of protection and fame, and throw me wholly in his power, he can ſtep forth, ſtill honour me with his friendſhip, and offer me an independence; and, though ſituated as I am, I muſt refuſe the latter, the former will ever be my comfort and ſolace in ſadneſs and ſorrow."

Here her ſenſations choaked the power of utterance, and her hearers appeared little leſs affected. Lady John, taking Ellinor's hand, ſaid, "My good girl, ſee you *unman* us; for, (ſhe added, ſmiling through the big drops that courſed each other down her cheeks), the miſſes, you know, do me the honour to claſs me in the *maſculine gender*. Come, take a turn in the air, it will reſtore you." She then led her into the garden; and

and, returning to the half-diſtracted Baronet ſaid, "Well, ſhe is indeed a noble-minded creature, Sir James; I do not wonder you feel an affection for her. I perfectly agree with you that there is no withſtanding the power of her various attractions. I never thought I could experience ſuch an attachment for a miſs of eighteen, as that I find ſtealing into my heart for this charming girl."

Sir James now tried to induce Lady John to uſe her intereſt to prevail on Ellinor to accept the annuity, which he came purpoſely to offer, for he had ſet his heart on making her in future independent of contingencies.

"No, Sir James, I will not attempt to biaſs her opinion; her own judgment is fully competent to enable her to act and do what is right and proper: added to that, I admire the ſpirit that induces her to prefer dependance on any *other* family, to receiving a favour from an individual of *that* by whom ſhe has been

been ſo baſely ſlandered. I am convinced that ſhe is conſcious of your rectitude and honour; that you have no views in your preſent generous offer, but to procure for her a ſafe aſylum from the perſecutious of *your ſex*, and to ſhield her from the malice of *her own*; though, Sir James, you have ſaid, and I truly believe you, that no perſon but myſelf ſhall be made acquainted with your bounty; and you do me but juſtice in ſuppoſing I am incapable of betraying the confidence repoſed in me; yet, to ſuch a mind as Ellinor's, the ſenſation that ſhe was receiving a pecuniary obligation from the man upon whoſe account ſhe had been ſlandered, the very *ſecreſy* it was neceſſary to uſe in accepting it, would be a tacit reproof, and bring with it a conviction, that the receiving it at *all* was improper.

" It muſt therefore be evident to you, that your bounty, inſtead of contributing to her happineſs, would make her miſerable, by robbing her of that ſelf-approbation that has hitherto ſupported and given her confidence

to

to oppoſe her enemies; becauſe ſhe has a conſcience void of offence, and has never acted with duplicity; of courſe Lady Lavington, who is unjuſtly her accuſer, is now alone to blame. Was Ellinor to allow herſelf to be clandeſtinely ſupported by you, though your inducement was merely juſtice, and her motive for receiving it merely gratitude, can a man, knowing the world as you do, imagine it will put thoſe conſtructions on your actions? no; on reflection you muſt be convinced, that it will be placed invidiouſly in the worſt point of view. Sir James you will excuſe me; for you know my character is to ſpeak *decidedly* my opinion; which is, that if ſuch an arrangement as you propoſe was to be acceded to by this poor girl, and, in deſpite of all human precautions, it was to take air, ſhe muſt inevitable loſe her character for ever; what now appeares doubtful, would then be announced as decided: Lady Lavington would be pitied as the moſt deceived and unhappy of wives; you arraigned as the worſt of men

and

and huſbands; Ellinor abuſed and execrated as the moſt abandoned and artful of women, who, it would be ſaid, you kept in opulence and ſplendour, waſting upon her that fortune that ought to be your daughter's."

"Stop, for God's ſake, Lady John; the outlines of the picture you have drawn, make me tremble with horrour, at what it would be when it received the finiſhing touches of the pencil of detraction. You have effectually frightened me from the purpoſe for which I came here: is there no way I can with propriety aſſiſt this dear child?"

"None, Sir James, from *you* ſhe cannot receive a favour; but comfort yourſelf, that in *me* ſhe ſhall find a firm friend."

Ellinor, who had been making an effort to conquer her warring paſſions, now entered. Lady John, ſeeing ſhe was about to addreſs Sir James, ſaid, "You need not pain yourſelf, my good girl, and your worthy friend, by ſaying any thing more upon the ſubject of this morning's converſation, as I have perſuaded

perſuaded him that you cannot, ſituated as you are, at this moment accept either his purſe or his protection."

"I ſincerely thank you, my dear lady, for this kind conſideration: to hear that Sir James is convinced by your arguments, gives me great pleaſure, and has taken a load from my heart; for him to think I refuſed his offered bounty from pride or ingratitude, would poiſon every comfort that may be yet in ſtore for me,. To be eſteemed by, and ſtill retain the good opinion and friendſhip of Sir James Lavington, will in every ſituation be my higheſt gratification, and proudeſt boaſt.

To prove myſelf worthy theſe bleſſings, my dear ſir, we muſt not meet again, till ſome unforeſeen turn of fate clears up my character to Lady Lavington, and the world is convinced of my innocence; then, when that happy moment arrives, will the grateful Ellinor, as now, [here ſhe threw herſelf on her knees] renew her thanks for repeated favours; and intreat, as ſhe does at this moment, a bleſſing from the beſt of human beings."

She

She took the hand of Sir James, who was attempting to raiſe her, on which fell in profuſion the genuine tears of ſenſibility, that were mingled with thoſe of this truly good man, while he ſaid—"Bleſs, oh, bleſs, merciful Omnipotence, this perſecuted young creature! and, though it is forbidden *me* to aſſiſt her, raiſe her up friends in the hour of danger. In thy good time reſtore her to the boſom of her parents, who may know and appretiate her worth, as doth thy humble ſuppliant."

"Thanks, oh thanks a thouſand times, my more than father, for thoſe good and pious wiſhes, which my heart tells me will yet be verified; that though we part in *ſorrow*, we ſhall meet again in *joy*. I feel your bleſſing calm my grief, ſteal over my ſenſes, and act on me as a potent cordial, that has exhilarated my depreſſed ſpirits, and renovated my ſinking hopes. May every good you have called down on me, be poured a thouſand fold on you and yours; for this I will

will not daily fail to offer up my humble petition."

Here ſhe modeſtly preſſed the hand of Sir James to her lips, and hurried out of the room to give free vent to her tears, and gain ſomething like fortitude to meet Lady John at dinner, who had been a ſilent, though not an unaffected ſpectator of the ſcene we have attempted to deſcribe.

Sir James, whoſe tender feelings had been rouſed to agony by this charming girl, ſoon took his leave, recommending her with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to the protection of Lady John, who cheerfully promiſed to comply with all his wiſhes.

On his departure her ladyſhip mounted her horſe, which had been in readineſs for ſome hours, and galloped ten miles through the foreſt, to brace up her nerves to their wonted tenſion, which the ſcenes ſhe had paſſed through with Ellinor for the laſt twenty-

twenty-four hours, had very much helped to relax from their uſual rigidity.

We will not pay our readers ſo bad a compliment, as to ſuppoſe they have not long ſince judged for themſelves, that, though a maſculine education had given a *fierté* to Lady John's manners, and her purſuits a ſtrength to her conſtitution, nature had mixed in her compoſition a large portion of the milk of human kindneſs, which made her

"Turn at the touch of joy or woe,
"And, turning, tremble too."

This ſhe called a weakneſs, of which ſhe was not ambitious of being ſuppoſed *capable*. Hence all the good, charitable, and generous actions ſhe was conſtantly in the habit of performing, were done anonymouſly; hence the children of her bounty, the objects of her munificence, knew not their benefactreſs.

She was not from oſtentation charitable; ſhe did not give her money to raiſe a church, for

for the ambition of ſeeing Lady John Dare-all in gilt letters over the door; or ſeek to blazon her good deeds by ſubſcribing liberally to every public charity, with her *title* pompouſly diſplayed at the head of the liſt; though ſhe beſtowed her alms profuſely to many receptacles for human miſery, it was under the ſignature of the *Unknown*; of courſe her *real* character was not appreciated, while her *aſſumed* one was a mark for malice, and a butt for laughter. She treated with the moſt ſovereign contempt all thoſe that thus thought of her; conſcious of acting right in eſſentials, like her hardy ſire, ſhe folded herſelf in the robe of honeſt integrity, being perſuaded that her eccentricities, were harmleſs, ſhe never condeſcended to enter into any juſtification of her actions.

We will now re-viſit Avon Place, to which Lady Fanny returned the morning after the maſquerade, and, with faſhionable effrontery, began to pity Ellinor's defalcation from virtue; and to enquire who were the perſons that

that had officiouſly torn off the maſk of her deceptions; and as things were ſituated, ſhe muſt add *cruelly* undeceived Lady Lavington, who had been ſo completely duped by her artifices, that in her caſe "ignorance was bliſs."

Lady Lavington recounted her adventure with the fortune-teller, and appeared doubtful whether ſhe ſhould yield implicit faith to all ſhe had informed her. As the *ſybil* did not explain who ſhe was, ſhe might be induced, through ſpleen, to fabricate the tale, to gratify herſelf, rather than from friendſhip for her. Lady Fanny, who feared all this glorious ſcene of miſchief would fall ſhort of its intended effect, by theſe doubts, determined to throw in her make-weight.

"My dear Lady Lavington, I could not bear the idea of robbing you of that truſt and confidence you placed in, that bad young woman, by letting you into her *real* character; but all, and a great deal more of a

worſe

worſe nature than the *ſybil* told you laſt night, I could have acquainted you with, long before you left London, which my charming Auguſta knows I communicated to her ſome time ſince, wiſhing it were poſſible to have told it to you, without too ſenſibly wounding your friendly boſom."

She now, as a confirmation of the fortune-teller's ſtory, and what ſhe had juſt affirmed, repeated the ſcene that Miſs Lavington and herſelf had witneſſed the evening Sir James walked with Ellinor to viſit her ladyſhip's village patients, when, on his return, he had yielded to what he had before ſo decidedly refuſed; the allowing them to be partakers of the Morton-Abbey maſquerade.

This change of opinion was to be attributed ſolely to the extraordinary influence of Ellinor, which they had heard him avow, as they ſtopped their horſes when they paſſed

the

the ſtile, meaning merely to ſpeak to them not to liſten to their diſcourſe.

Here ſhe painted the ſcene that our readers are already acquainted with, in the moſt vivid colours, of which her malicious and artful mind was capable; and as ſhe ſaw the poiſon work with all the potency ſhe wiſhed, on the mind of Lady Lavington, ſhe pretended to be ſhocked at the miſchief, of which ſhe called herſelf the innocent author; fanning the flame till it raged with redoubled violence; pretending, out of commiſſeration for her dear Lady Lavington's feelings, that perhaps ſhe might have been miſtaken in her ideas; that Sir James, preſſing and kiſſing the hand of his daughter's companion, and telling her that ſuch was the powerful faſcination of her voice upon him, that it was impoſſible to refuſe any thing to her requeſt, might mean nothing *improper*; of courſe his wife, daughter, and their friend and gueſt, ought to bow in gratitude to this fair idol of his idolatry, for thoſe

pleaſures

pleaſures ſhe had uſed *her* intereſt to procure them.

Lady Fanny added, ſhe felt relieved from a favour ſhe ſhould have been ſorry to have received from ſo improper a perſonage, by the expoſure of the ſummer-houſe ſcene; which placed in a clear point of view, that the lady ſought her *own* gratification with her favourite Colonel, in ſoliciting to go to Morton Abbey—that their pleaſures were only made the excuſe to carry on her own intrigues.

"Be comforted, my dear friends, you have got rid of the ſyren, I hope, for ever; but who could have imagined that maſculine monſter, Lady John, would have come forth in a new character, even as the protectreſs of diſtreſſed damſels? Surely this faſcinating Ellinor, as Sir James calls her, muſt have *witching* powers: as ſoon ſhould I have expected ſympathy and tenderneſs from the ſavage bear, or fierce Hyrcanian tyger, as from

the invulnerable Lady John Dareall: ſo changed muſt be her character, ſo truly altered her nature, before ſhe could be induced to admit a woman into her inhibited caſtle; it will not ſurpriſe me to hear, ſhe ſighs with ſympathy at the ſoft ſorrows of her gueſt, and that the ideas of her *much-wronged* innocence ſhould draw tears from eyes unuſed to weep."

Lady Fanny thus gave vent to her heart, overcharged againſt Ellinor with direful hate, by infuſing a part of it into Lady Lavington's, taking a fiend-like gratification in ſeeing all around her equally wretched; for it diſtracted her to obſerve, that the miſery ſhe intended Ellinor recoiled upon herſelf; that the object ſhe deteſted was protected by the only woman in the world from whom ſhe wiſhed her ſeparated, who had avowed her approbation of Sir Harry's intention of making her his wife; and ſhe doubted not would perſuade Ellinor to accept him, if it was only to mortify *her*, and triumph over her

her former acquaintance, by converting their pity into envy.

Sir James had returned from Bramble-Hall, his heart lacerated with ſorrow for the loſs of the ſociety of his favourite Ellinor, and the misfortunes his innocent fondneſs for her converſation had occaſioned. He had thrown himſelf into a chair in his library, loſt in the profundity of his own reflections, till, arouſed by the paſſionate tears and loud complaints of his lady, he aroſe to go to her, whom he found was in the breakfaſt-room, adjoining that where he ſat.—Hearing the voice of Lady Fanny, he ſtopped, not chuſing in his preſent frame of mind, to meet her whom he looked on as an active agent in all that had happened, to diſunite a family, that were mutually happy before the ill-fated moment when ſhe became a part of it.

While he pauſed how to act, he overheard the diſcourſe we have juſt related.

Enraged at, and now convinced who was the vile author of all this complicated evil, that he ſo bitterly mourned, he burſt into the room; his natural pale countenance fluſhed with honeſt indignation, his eyes flaſhing furious glances, that made the guilty Lady Fanny tremble, as he thus addreſſed her:—

"After informing your ladyſhip that chance, not deſign (for to you I leave the meanneſs of liſtening) has occaſioned me to hear the converſation you have juſt held with my wife and daughter, you will not be ſurpriſed at my anger, knowing, as I now do, who the ſerpent is that has infuſed baneful poiſon into the ear of Lady Lavington. In imitation of your great prototype, the firſt tempter, your ladyſhip has fully gratified your malignant nature, by changing what you found a family of love and confidence, into one of hatred and diſtruſt; driving from its protection a young woman, whom you purſue with ſuch unabated malice, who, by your arts,

you

you hope to ſee cruſhed to the earth, that I feel a *preſentiment* will one day ſhine forth with a ſplendour, to which, by her beauty, ſenſe, and merit, ſhe is juſtly entitled:—you cannot reaſonably expect to do any more miſchief in a family, whom you will have the ſuperlative ſatisfaction of leaving juſt as wretched as you found it happy—I therefore muſt requeſt you will quit Avon-Place directly. It will be enough to bear the miſeries you have occaſioned, without the additional torment of ſeeing the author of them. My carriage and ſervants ſhall attend you to your father's houſe, either in town or country; to whom I will directly write my reaſons for declining the honour of your ladyſhip's company."

Lady Fanny's natural *hauteur* and acquired confidence, appeared for a few moments to have forſaken her, when ſhe found that ſhe had been overheard by Sir James, herſelf expoſed, and her evil plots laid open. She was at firſt mortified at his con-

temptuous anger, but ſhe rallied her courage on the inſtant, when ſhe reflected on the high blood of her anceſtors, and the inſult their decendant had received, being treated with ſo little ceremony, and deſired to quit the houſe of a *ſimple Baronet*, merely for having taken leave to ſpeak her ſentiments of an inſignificant girl who belonged to nobody—a poor devil of a companion to his fooliſh daughter.

Aſſuming, therefore, a perfect *nonchalance*, ſhe ſaid, "Sir James, what you heard me avow to Lady Lavington was through friendſhip to her, who has already, in my humble opinion, been too long a *dupe* to the artifices of others. That your anger ſhould be levelled at me is not ſurpriſing, whom you ſuppoſe to be the occaſion of her ladyſhip's ſhutting her doors againſt the enemy of her peace; but I muſt call to your recollection, that I was not the fortune-teller that uncloſed to Lady Lavington the book of fate, or brought the party to the

ſummer-houſe, to unmaſk the innocent intrigues of your ſpotleſs favourite. As to quitting your houſe, after the unpoliſhed and brutal behaviour I have this morning experienced from its maſter, be aſſured I ſhall do ſo immediately. Reſpecting your carriage and ſervants moſt graciouſly offered, I ſhall have no uſe for them, as it is not my intention to leave your neighbourhood, having received both a polite and friendly invitation to reſide till Chriſtmas with Mrs. Oſwald, which I had accepted before I was favoured with a diſmiſſion from the hoſpitable ſeat of the philanthropic Sir James Lavington."

She now quitted the room, humming, "Adieu! thou dreary pile." No ſooner was ſhe departed, than Lady Lavington was going to arraign the indecorous treatment of Sir James to Lady Fanny; but he ſtopped her ſhort, inſiſting that her name ſhould never again be mentioned in his preſence, telling his daughter, that, as ſhe valued his eternal diſpleaſure, ſhe muſt never attempt to write or keep up any acquaintance with Lady Fanny Flutter;

Flutter; and, ſince ſhe meant to reſide at Morton-Abbey, to prevent their ever meeting, he informed Lady Lavington that ſhe muſt prepare to go immediately to their ſeat in Berkſhire.

In vain the ladies attempted to remonſtrate. He told them his reſolution was taken, and he would be obeyed; firſt deſiring Lady Lavington to order Ellinor's clothes to be ſent to Lady John Dareall's, and that ſhe would incloſe what money was due to her; for he had ſeen her that morning, and ſhe was determined not to receive any thing as a favour from a family who had loaded her with injuries, in return for her endeavours to amuſe them, and improve their daughter. He alſo deſired Auguſta, that the harp he had purchaſed might be ſent in *her* name to Miſs Harcourt, begging her acceptance of it. In conſequence of her cheerful compliance with this requeſt, he promiſed to replace it with a much more ſuperb one, when they returned to town.

Matters

Matters being thus arranged, Ellinor received her wardrobe the ſame afternoon, accompanied by a twenty pound note from Lady Lavington, with a formal card from Auguſta, deſiring ſhe would receive the harp as a ſmall compenſation for the trouble ſhe had taken, to inſtruct her upon that inſtrument. She returned the following anſwer :—

" Ellinor will do herſelf the honour of accepting Miſs Lavington's preſent, becauſe ſhe would not be ſuppoſed, from pride or reſentment, to refuſe receiving a favour from one, to whoſe family Ellinor, in deſpite of their recent conduct reſpecting her, muſt ever feel herſelf a grateful debtor for innumerable obligations."

The money ſent by Lady Lavington, Ellinor made no ſcruple of receiving, as it was a part of the ſtipend that lady had propoſed to allow her, and which ſhe felt conſcious ſhe deſerved, for her unremitted attentions to her daughter's improvement.

END OF VOL. II.

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Errata.

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86,	15,	duct	conduct	
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172,	16,	petit soupe	petit souper	
178,	7,	feeling	feelings	
234,	14,	scandel	scandal	
248,	15,	au desespoir	au desespoir	
252,	3,	ook	look	
300,	11,	an	any	
342,	4,	decendant	descendant.	